Visions in a Frame

A Study of Development Through Gaze Refinement in Dorothea Brooke, Isabel Archer, and Lily Briscoe

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Abstract

In *Middlemarch*, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *To the Lighthouse*, a development process as a gaze refinement and *Bildung-durch-Bilder* process takes place. In this thesis, the *Awakening Conscience Model* is developed to discuss the heroines' developments. The model combines painting theory, a visual reading of the text and a psychological understanding that images reveal a viewer's state of maturity. It is built on Millais's *Mariana* and Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* which are evoked at different points in the novels and mark crucial moments in the heroines' self-consciousness building processes. Stage 1 of the model represents a dreaming gaze; Stage 2 the awakened gaze; Stage 3 the production of this awakened gaze – an image – which allows for the claim that, with a mature gaze, certain power over one's representation can be gained. An emancipation story is studied within the novels and across the novels. In *Middlemarch*, the heroine manages to develop an idea of her self-representation, but is still deeply rooted in the limiting Victorian world. Isabel, although believed much freer, is stuck on the threshold – just like Henry James's novel remains on the threshold between Victorian and modern literature. Lily is clearly modern and emancipates herself as a female artist and positions the novel as a discussion of female agency through an active and productive own gaze. Own and others' views are limiting if not developed properly – not only men's of women, but also women's own.

Middlemarch, *The Portrait of a Lady* und *To the Lighthouse* zeigen Entwicklungsprozesse der drei Heldinnen als Prozesse zur Schärfung des Blicks und als *Bildung durch Bilder*. Diese Doktorarbeit entwickelt das *Awakening Conscience Model* für die Diskussion dieser Entwicklungsprozesse. Das Modell bringt Malereitheorie, eine visuelle Leseart der Texte und das psychologische Verständnis, dass Bilder den Stand des Selbstbewusstseins des Betrachters wiederspiegeln, zusammen. Das Modell baut auf Millais' *Mariana* und Hunts *The Awakening Conscience* auf, die beide an bedeutenden Stellen in den Entwicklungen der Heldinnen in den Romanen hervorgerufen werden. Phase 1 des modellierten Prozesses steht für den träumenden Blick, Phase 2 für den erwachten und Phase 3 für das, was ein wacher Blick erschaffen kann – ein eigenes Bild – was die Schlussfolgerung erlaubt, dass ein entwickelter Blick einen Einfluss auf die eigene Darstellungskraft und Sichtweise ermöglicht. Die darin enthaltene Emanzipierung wird analysiert innerhalb der Texte und über die Texte hinweg. Dorothea erlangt gewisse Selbstdefinition; Isabel bleibt auf der Schwelle zwischen der einschränkenden Viktorianischen Welt und der Moderne stehen, genau wie Henry James' Roman, Lily emanzipiert sich als Künstlerin, als gestaltende Frau, in einer modernen Welt. Ein unentwickelter Blick – der eigene oder der von anderen – schränkt die eigene Handlungsfähigkeit ein.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

1 A Painting Analysis of *Middlemarch*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *To the Lighthouse*

I will begin my analysis an image of Isabel Archer in a frame and on a threshold. The story of Isabel, who is transformed into 'the portrait of a lady,' is one of three stories of female characters of which this analysis is composed. Three heroines and their life experiences will be displayed – as if put into a frame for the purpose of analysis. At the end of Jane Campion's 1996 film of *The Portrait of a Lady*, precisely such a picture of a woman in a frame is visible.

Figure 1 Four film stills from Campion's *The Portrait of a Lady*.[1]

Before Isabel forms the foreground of the picture, the door frame shows the background of a homely scene with warm light. As soon as Isabel appears in the frame, the lights go out and the background becomes a more or less even and uniform surface. Isabel first appears from behind, then in profile, and finally from the front. One of her hands is always on the door knob. This links her to the background of the picture which is potentially warm and inviting. However, she stops and stays outside in the cold. As she turns towards the spectator, us, two realizations happen: her change of mind regarding not going in and her awareness of being watched. With this reading of the scene, I introduce a crucial notion and a recurring image in this analysis: turning always means a realization; turning also implies the blossoming of a flower, the awakening of an individual.

[1] Film stills from Campion, Jane. *The Portrait of a Lady*. 1996: 02:13:32 / 02:13:36 / 02:13:38 / 02:13:40

Isabel stands on the threshold between a life that is safe but without a purpose, and a life that is hard (cold, no lights) but with a purpose, a life that she has actively and consciously chosen for herself. She is framed in a door frame. Her action of turning is shown, suggesting both that she knows where to turn and creating suspense because we are about to find out. Isabel is exposed and her decision public. Isabel actively offers a portrait of herself by presenting herself in a door frame that displays her exactly as a painting frame would. She chooses the frame; it is not chosen for her. This is her frame. This is her representation of herself. This is not the 'portrait' that her husband has created of her, the one that gives the story its title. It is a 'portrait' of a self-conscious woman who confronts her difficult situation in society. It shows a woman who is conscious of being watched and aware that all situations in society are complex. She faces the spectator, us, as if to tell the world that she knows. She is thus not only on the threshold between her past and her future, but also between the narrative of the film and the world outside the narrative, and thus the question arises of what impact her story can leave on a spectator. This snapshot holds so much of what this thesis is about. The attraction of a frame and its function as an eye catcher is at the core of this analysis.

1.1 A Study of Seeing and Being Perceived

In my thesis, I deal with visual strategies in *Middlemarch* by George Eliot – a Victorian 19th-century novel, *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James – a modern 19th-century novel, and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf – a modern 20th-century novel. Women in frames (as painting objects), such as Isabel in the film scene just described, as well as women in front of frames (as spectators of paintings) are at the core of this study: in focus are Dorothea Brooke of *Middlemarch*, Isabel Archer of *The Portrait of a Lady*, and Lily Briscoe together with her painting object Mrs. Ramsay of *To the Lighthouse*. I analyze in what way the heroines' capability of understanding the visual arts, as well as acts of creating paintings, determine whether they are perceived either as women with human traits or as allegorical objects of artworks by other characters in the novels and thus described as such by the narrator and transported to the reader. At the center of this analysis thus lies the understanding that there is reciprocity between viewing and being viewed.

The three novels span a time between 1871 and 1927. All three novels feature an important element of their time, namely the presence of the visual arts in literary texts. The interest in the visual arts in literature reflects the increasing significance and complication of visuality in general. One speaks of an iconographical revolution that began in the second half of the 19th century.[2] People were confronted with a greater amount and a different kind of visual data stemming from the invention of photography and, connected with it, the proliferation of pictures in mass media and advertising, as well as the invention of new optical devices, which allowed new forms of perspective. Among a number of emerging painting trends, experimental kinds also multiplied. Interpretation of visual information became an increasing challenge. Against this background, the three authors composed novels that contain a remarkably iconographic quality. On the one hand, they include direct references to

[2] Cf. Brosch 1

paintings and artists; on the other hand, they offer many scenes that are presented in a way that strongly reminds one of a painting.

In a time – and the period in which these three novels are set clearly is such a time – when individuality gains importance and reforms and inventions bring about constant changes, which require constant adjustments on the part of the people, the individual perspective moves into the center of attention. According to E. H. Gombrich, "perception is culturally coded,"[3] and Renate Brosch is aware of a need of "subjective organization of vision,"[4] due to the multitude of impressions provided in the new age of visual expression. Robert Pippin develops the idea that each individual has her own point of view and shows that such multiple viewing constructs a web of judging and demanding views.[5] Rosemary Ashton specifies the concept of the social web: "[t]he web is organic, connective, infinitely complex, and so fine a metaphor for society and the individual's place in it."[6] In this web, individual representation becomes increasingly difficult. Moreover, as a gaze is subjective in nature, it easily produces a distortion of the perceived material. Idealization and misjudgments are the result. The complex situation of self-determination against society's judgment, on the one hand, and the difficulty of interpretation of visual experiences on the other hand, leads to moments of frustration and necessarily to the development of understanding and moral learning.

The "individual organization of vision" to manage the complexity of visuality is examined in connection with painting in this analysis. The basis of such an approach can be found in the novels themselves. In fact, the three novels construct one major metaphor which draws on the semantic field of painting. Individual organization is the product of a negotiation of visual impressions – an image negotiation – which, in a painting discourse, equals the discussion of a negotiation of tastes in art and of the development of new art tendencies that reacted to previous ones in some way or another. The metaphor of painting is used to reflect social life in the sense that the shift of concern in painting is a product of the shift of concerns in society. Die "Abschaffung der Grundannahmen der klassischen Perspektive"[7] in painting is the realization that what situations appear to be is not the entire truth, since outer appearance provides incomplete and, therefore, distorted information about the viewed object.

The new concern in painting consisted in proving the inconsistency of appearance. It related to the belief that images do not merely display synchronous and, therefore, harmonious representations of reality, but also the diachronic component added by the personal history of the beholder. The consciousness of the possibilities and the role of the painter or spectator who paints scenes in his mind increases. Indeed, the provided image expresses the point of view of its creator and offers by no means a "comfortably objective overview,"[8] but a fragmented, egoistic perception. Art

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[3] As referred to in Torgovnick 27 and Brosch 3

[4] Brosch XI-XII

[5] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 144

[6] Eliot. *Middlemarch* (henceforth referred to as *MM*) xxi

[7] Brosch 26

[8] Brosch XIV

critics become interested in "the painter's sight or insight, not the subject unadorned."[9] On the social level, this approach can, for instance, be applied to the images that people have of each other and the recognition that the appearance of a situation is always a place where multiple contributions from multiple spectators come together. In order to study the creator's eye in this context, the reasons for the creation/the perception of such images are taken into consideration. The characters' points of view and motivation in having such images, perspectives, and opinions can be examined.

Middlemarch provides an example of how individual viewing creates an image that again is a reflection of the image-creator, the spectator. "Swiftly moving clouds only now and then allowed a gleam of light up any object, whether ugly or beautiful, that happened to stand within its golden shower."[10] This image illustrates the technique of presenting an object in a positive or negative light by considering and illuminating only those parts of the object that convey the intended meaning. In this manner, the chosen details begin to be viewed as a whole, and the meaning of the selected parts determines the nature of the entire object. The images thus produced are, of course, debatable since every spectator has the possibility of questioning them; for instance, by including or highlighting again different aspects of the scene or by raising doubt about the respectability of the creator of an image. The view depends on what is visible to the spectator and on the representation she[11] chooses. The cloud image thus also becomes an illustration of what Brosch calls a "fragmentierter Blick."[12] This fragmented, egoistic view represents the characters' incapability to represent an object in its entirety and consequently the incompleteness of any representation.

Creating an image means that this picture is always exposed to negotiation and challenge. These negotiations appear in the form of the different points of view about the object and creator of an image from the outside world, i.e., from society. The imagination of the creator of an image influences the first version of the image. The reactions to this image from others, however, shape it as well. It can be said that opinions about the creator have as much influence on the reception and the acceptance of an image by other spectators as the creator's opinions about the object of the picture. What is seen can never be perceived as a whole and, therefore, never makes complete sense. For this reason, meaning has to be attached to the viewed object. This meaning has no absolute truth, but is chosen by an individual and is perhaps only valid for this one individual at the moment of perceiving it.

Learning about this fact is moral learning. Representing and enabling in order to experience this fact is moral education. In the novels and in this analysis, paintings are the nucleus where the contributions of all spectators become visible – are displayed in a frame – and thus where moral learning manifests itself. It is for this reason that painting does not have a decorative function in this analysis, but an analytical one. "The author's ability to form impressions in 'pictures' becomes a source of knowledge."[13] Accordingly, the experiences that the heroines encounter through paintings

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[9] Géracht 268

[10] *MM* 323

[11] I will use the female pronoun if a noun refers to both male and female agents

[12] Brosch 27

[13] Torgovnick 43

and their dealing with those experiences becomes a visualization of a learning process. Their individual organization of viewing requires the knowledge of how viewing comes into being in general and their individual stake in the process. By knowing themselves better, the better the heroines become at viewing and the stronger a part in the social web they become. The three novels provide three development stories of female characters. I will represent these as a triptych of moral education through images (*Bildung-durch-Bilder-Triptychon*).

1.1.1 On the Lookout for *Pictorial Indicators*

The metaphor of painting is entirely incorporated in this analysis in the sense that the novels are the subject of a painting analysis in this thesis. A painting analysis of a novel is, on the one hand, the reflection of the conviction that painting offers useful analytical tools for the reading of a narrative and, on the other hand, the contribution to and continuation of an interdisciplinary tradition of the visual arts and the written word. Interdisciplinary criticism of these two arts has a long tradition. In "Framing the Fine Arts Through Rhetoric,"[14] Marguerite Helmer names the milestones in this long tradition. Her starting point is the Sister Arts.

> While the investigation of the Sister Arts was practiced from the 18th century onward (mostly notably by [G.E. Lessing], Walter Pater and John Ruskin in 19th century Britain), it remained for the 20th century American literary critic Jean Hagstrum to explicitly establish a critical tradition. Hagstrum announced his intent to apply the techniques of literary criticism to the analysis of visual depiction in literature in the 1958 text titled *The Sister Arts*. His primary concern focused on poetry that employed the rhetorical trope of *ekphrasis*, the art of description. […] Hagstrum also coined the term pictorialism, which references a specific type of verbal depiction in literature, that which creates pictures in the mind's eye of the readers."[15]

The Sister Arts critics mainly focus, on the one hand, on the difference between the two arts, that is the static characteristics of the visual arts versus the flexibility and time dimension of the narrative (which is a Lessinite approach) and, on the other hand, on the effect each art has, especially in the foreign context (which is a Ruskinian approach[16]).

The concept of *pictorialism* considers the combination of the two arts and the power of communication this combination has, which Hagstrum, according to Helmers, describes as an artistic creation in the reader's mind.[17] Marianna Torgovnick[18] also studied pictorialism in 19th- and early 20th-century novels and stressed that pictorialism in novels is an act of imagination. A painting is created in the mind of the reader upon a stimulus in the text. "…the reader's attention is made to concentrate on the object …. It is remarkable how the eye is held fast to the shield. The written text imitates a

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[14] Helmers *Defining Visual Rhethorics*

[15] Helmers 64, Hagstrum *The Sister Arts* cited in Helmers 64

[16] Landow "Introduction" par. 5

[17] Cf. Helmers 64

[18] Torgovnick *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence and Woolf*

carefully rendered painting engaging and informing its audience by means of visual representation."[19] The reader's eye is arrested as if by a verbally created frame around a passage of text.

Torgovnick promotes Hagstrum's definition of *pictorialism* to determine what scenes in a novel qualify as *pictorialism* and instances that are presented like a painting in a frame. She claims that "[i]n order to be 'pictorial,' a description or image must be, in its essentials, capable of translation into painting or some other visual art."[20] The reader needs to be able to recognize or remember painting techniques and "pictorial indicators"[21] such as form, color, and perspective in a scene. Such scenes do not necessarily have to refer to existing paintings.[22] If they do, the text "refers the reader's imagination to a prior-existing picture, thus asking it to perform an act of memory, rather than a creative act of collaboration with the author. In effect, the evocation of the novel's action in terms of a picture existing outside the novel sidetracks the process of *pictorialism* and constricts the reader's visual imagination."[23] Only a true act of visual imagination is considered *pictorialism*. However, the reference to existing artworks allows the inclusion of discourse on art history as part of the analysis of the novel.

Visual rhetoricians such as Helmers, who present a more recent research approach to the visual arts and text, also study the linking of the two arts as an act of communication but, in contrast to researchers of *pictorialism,* do so the other way around. Visual rhetoricians are concerned with how narrative can be added to paintings. They use "linguistic approaches to the study of images,"[24] convinced that "[…] narrative liberates painting."[25]

> … rather than search for correspondences between the word and the image (poetry and painting), a rhetoric of the visual abstracts both text and image to the level of signs. Such a practice moves away from – but does not violate – Lessing's contention that one essential difference between poetry and painting is the medium. … the message and the act of communication […] is more important than the medium.[26]

Rhetoricians "[…] are asking how visual images are themselves carriers of meaning."[27] There are two types of signifiers that both have meaning: the medium of words and the evoked medium of paint and brush strokes. And there are two levels of the signified: that of the words and that of the evoked image. The advantages of images are that they provide more information at a glance than text (which clearly forces a reading in a determined sequence). An evoked image creates an impression in addition to that created by the reading of the text, and provides an immediate overview of the situation

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[19] Helmers 17 based on Hagstrum's theory of *pictorialism* in *The Sister Arts*

[20] Torgovnick 26

[21] Torgovnick 28

[22] Cf. Torgovnick 27

[23] Torgovnick 81

[24] Helmers 16

[25] Helmers 66

[26] Helmers 64

[27] Helmers 64

and casual relations. Meaning is conveyed quickly and in a condensed way. A complex construct of information appears simple to understand. The communicative power of evoked images is enormous. Hence the receptor's collaboration and aptitude to read these becomes a main point of interest.

Visual rhetoricians claim that each beholder of a painting tells her story by looking at the painting. They believe that

> [w]hen we read pictures – in fact, images of any kind, whether painted, sculpted, photographed, built or performed – we bring to them the temporal quality of narrative. We extend that which is limited by a frame to be a before and an after, and through the craft of telling stories […], we lend the immutable picture an infinite and inexhaustible life… We construct our story through echoes in other stories, through the illusion of self-reflection, through technical and historical knowledge, through gossip, reverie, prejudice, illumination, scruples, ingenuity, compassion, wit. No story elicited by an image is final or exclusive, and measures of correctness vary according to the same circumstances that give rise to the story itself.[28]

The spectators' stories which, according to visual rhetoric theory, are equal to narration are prompted by an image. "Narration animates the static representation of a work of art. Because the viewer must supply dialogue and sequential action"[29] – thus the rhetoric. The idea that paintings are not to be looked at without a context, but are embedded in a narrative, leads to precisely the approach that is carried out in this analysis. Two assumptions underlie this approach: 1) there are passages identifiable as painting descriptions in the novel and 2) the characters of the novels form painting objects and spectators and thus provide spectator stories and object backgrounds that all influence the framed scenes categorized as paintings.

The novels are read as a series of paintings in this analysis which lets the reader be on the lookout for *pictorial indicators* at all times. This is my way of conducting an interdisciplinary approach. Painting theory and elements provide an analytical framework. The technique of visual hermeneutics is applied; this implies that the meaning of text is brought out through analyses of text passages that have been identified as *pictorialism*, i.e., as scenes that appear like descriptions of paintings. For each thus identified passage, a clear focus and perspective is also identified and a possible intention for the representation as it appears. By doing so, this analysis produces an art historian and art critic reading of the novel, which extends the frame of reference for its reading from that of literature to that of painting. It provides a possible reading of the paintings at the level of the reader and also discusses characters' possible readings within the diegesis. For readings on both levels, the characters' backgrounds, as well as the setting of the novel, will give guidance.

For a pictorial reading of the novel to work, of course, passages of the text need to be identifiable as paintings. *Pictorial indicators* I will call information in the text by means of which a verbally produced painting can be determined. These indicators are formal elements of painting that are common objects of study in the realm of painting. In this analysis, I will focus on the elements of the frame, canvas, indicators of perspective, arrangements of contrasts or parallels (e.g. in color, light and shadow, and material), lighting, background-foreground relationship, and, of course, any direct

[28] Helmers 67

[29] Helmers 67

allusions to existing paintings, painters, or painting tendencies. All mentioned elements of study will not only serve for the identification, but also for the analysis of the scene, object, background, and spectator.

The frame is the first object of study and the first *pictorial indicator* to identify a verbally produced painting. Whenever frames of any form are mentioned, a link to painting is easily established. However, frames can also be set around scenes for the purpose of analysis without a direct mention of an existing frame. This is precisely the pictorial reading technique of the novel that I suggest in this analysis. Frames frame a scene and make it describable as a painting and understandable because the flow of events that challenge the senses is stopped for a moment. By means of a frame, a slice of reality is selected and this particular choice has meaning. By choosing what to bring into a frame and in what way to do so, a story is told in a certain way. Hustvedt claims:

> Because it determines boundary and scale, the frame is vital to understanding the image inside it. Are we looking at a miniature world or a gigantic one? Are the figures in the painting as large as I am or are they reduced? A tiny painting affects me differently than a huge one. The frame also circumscribes my vision in a way that is unlike ordinary looking. Walking down the street, I never see everything. My vision is filtered by necessity: I ignore some images and take in others, and what I see is a constant flux, only one part of a drift of stimuli, in which the visual can't be easily extricated from what is bombarding my other senses. […] A painting allows my eyes to focus on a space delimited by an absolute perimeter and ponder a still, silent, and odorless image. This is a highly restricted, contemplative form of looking that is in many ways much easier than absorbing the myriad sights of daily life.[30]

According to the 19th-century understanding of frames, spectators use frames to express what they see and, in this manner, make sense of the visual information presented to them. The frame helps spectators focus on a spot and thus see more than when eyes are darting about.

Window and door frames are often metaphors for painting frames. They suggest the idea that a frame cuts out a chosen reality and makes a representation out of it:

> Tür und Fenster sind eng verwandte bauliche Wirklichkeiten. Ihre Wertigkeit als Bildmatrize ist jedoch jeweils ganz verschieden. Das Fenster öffnet das Innere nach aussen. Durchs Fenster sieht man nach draussen. Die Tür hingegen gehört nicht dem Bereich des Visuellen an. Durch die Tür tritt man ein oder geht hinaus. Durchs Fenster blickt man. Das Fenster und nicht die Tür spielt seit Alberti die Rolle der Gemälde-Metapher.[31]

When paintings include window or door frames, they make the topics of reality vs. representation and the reliability of the visible the actual topic of the painting. "Die Grenze die [die Tür] darstellt, ist nicht so scharf wie die des Fensters, welches Kultur und Natur trennt."[32]

The question of how to fix a frame is omnipresent in painting discourses. A frame gives the impression of fixedness, but since a frame can be deliberately set around possible painting scenes, the sense of permanency and the impression of being the absolute truth of a scene is reduced.

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[30] Hustvedt xvi

[31] Stoichita 61

[32] Stoichita 63

> Gegenüber dem Renaissance-Rahmen mit seiner quasi-architektonischen Form und Funktion erlangt der ‚moderne' Rahmen eine gewisse Flexibilität. Die Verallgemeinerung des rechteckigen Formats, die Befreiung der Malerei von einem obligatorischen Aufstellungsort (in diesem Fall Kirche oder Kapelle) lassen eine freie Beziehung zwischen dem Bild und der ‚Corniche' entstehen. Ein Bild kann die eine oder andere Rahmung erhalten, und sie kann manchmal nach ein paar Jahren ausgetauscht werden, ohne dass das Werk unter ästhetischem Gesichtspunkt schaden nähme. Die Freiheit ist fast total.[33]

In the same way, Adorno speaks of the flexibility of the frame:

> [...] for Adorno, art is not an absolute given that never changes, but a historically changing conglomeration of ideas and objects. This principle is taken directly from Hegel.[34]

Compared to later concepts of the frame, however, the nineteenth-century understanding of the frame is still very fixed: In *In der Weissen Zelle*, Brian O'Doherty describes the meaning of the frame in the nineteenth century as:

> [...] jedes Gemälde [galt] als eine selbständige Einheit, die durch einen schweren Rahmen nach aussen und durch ein komplettes System der Perspektive nach innen vollkommen […] abgeschottet wurde. […] Der Geist des 19. Jahrhunderts war auf Messung und Unterteilung aus, und das Auge des 19. Jahrhunderts respektierte die Hierarchie der Genres und die Autorität des Rahmens. […] Seine Eigenschaft als absolute Grenze wird in der Tafelmalerei bis ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein bestätigt. […] Es gibt kaum Anzeichen dafür, dass der Raum innerhalb des Gemäldes eine Fortsetzung des Raums ausserhalb des Gemäldes hat.[35]

The frame as a concept is well established and accepted in painting trends of the time in which the novel was written.

The scenes around which a frame is set are not arbitrarily chosen but a conscious choice, the legitimization of which is given by the occurrence of *pictorial indicators*. The frame setting technique applied in this analysis will be mirrored in frame setting practices that the characters adopt, as I will argue. Let me talk about possible appearances of paintings in the text that are found by means of looking out for *pictorial indicators* and that provide the paintings I want to study for this analysis and let me thereby clarify this concept of frame setting. The way in which paintings are featured in the novel is twofold. On the one hand, the novel refers to specific existing paintings or artists, and, on the other, it evokes paintings with scenes that strongly resemble a description of a painting. It is these evoked paintings that form the basis of the painting analyses conducted in this thesis.[36] Evoking a painting means to call an image to the reader's mind when she is reading a passage and make her recognize what appears to be like a painter's depiction of different visual tools and methods – frame, lighting, colors, scene setting, and material. An evoked painting can also come

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[33] Stoichita 75

[34] Hooker 4

[35] O'Doherty 13-15

[36] A real painting is identified as soon as the reference appears. An evoked painting is identified when the language of the novel suddenly turns into a pictorial description of the scene.

into being upon a reader's realization of a reference to an existing painting by seeing similarities of the content of the description in the text and the real painting. Furthermore, in the same way as existing paintings outside of the novel can be remembered and prompt an evoked painting, earlier evoked paintings in the novel can do so. Also possible is a painting series within the novel that tells its narrative through its seriality.

Once an evoked painting is identified, spectator perspective and focalization can be assigned. Two types of evoked paintings can be distinguished due to a distinction of the perspective: *imaginary paintings* and *hypothetical paintings*.[37] The criteria used for the determination of these two types of paintings, i.e., imaginary and hypothetical paintings, are the spectators and their angles. Whenever the narrator (and equally the reader) adopts the position of the spectator of a painting-like scene and no views of the characters in the novel are communicated, I will speak of *imaginary paintings*. Whenever the narrator's description of a painting-like moment can be allocated to a particular character and is presented as the character's view, I will use the term *hypothetical paintings*. "[…] pictorialism often arises when we see through a character's eyes"[38] and this latter form plays a crucial role when studying the characters' response to images. In short, imaginary paintings are those which are evoked by the narrator who presents a scene as a painting to the reader or the ensemble of characters. Hypothetical paintings are those which are created by one character representing what she sees and experiences at a particular moment.

The two types can appear with or without a clearly recognizable existing and known painting as a basis, so that there are four types of evoked paintings in total: imaginary paintings with or without underlying real painting and hypothetical paintings with or without underlying real paintings. An overview of the four types and the way they will be analyzed in the novel is shown in Table 1.

	Imaginary Painting	**Hypothetical Painting**
	Narrator or totality of characters see/create painting	Perspective of a painting ascribed to one particular character
With underlying real painting	• Analysis by means of *pictorial indicators* plus indication of painting and painter tendency • Background of studied object and novel setting	• Analysis by means of *pictorial indicators* plus indication of painting and painter tendency • Background of studied object, novel setting, and particular character as spectator
Without underlying real painting	• Analysis by means of *pictorial indicators*, maybe assuming painting and painter tendency • Background of studied object and novel setting	• Analysis by means of *pictorial indicators*, maybe assuming painting and painter tendency • Background of studied object, novel setting, and particular character as spectator

Table 1 The four types of evoked paintings and how they are analyzed (own illustration)

[37] Cf. Marianna Torgovnick's terminology from her book *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence and Woolf*, 172

[38] Torgovnick 87

The evoked paintings can be analyzed as if they were existing paintings. If no underlying real painting is recognizable, assumptions about period and painting tendency have to be made – if helpful. When a frame can be set around a scene due to recognizable *pictorial indicators*, an evoked painting is identified. The distinction between imaginary or hypothetical painting can be made in a second step by defining the spectator and focus of the scene as well as the relationship between spectator and scene.

In this analysis, art tendencies are identified through *pictorial indicators* by means of which underlying real paintings are called into a spectator's mind. Such *pictorial indicators* are, beside direct references, also typical elements of specific painting eras or tendencies. In this manner, for instance, "classical nudities"[39] evoke religious, allegorical, Renaissance paintings, whereas a maid following her duties rather hints at realist artistic language. Thematic elements can thus also help identify an evoked painting. These thus identified tendencies are discussed in terms of their *Kunstwollen*[40]; that is to say, the focus on a tendency's basic urge of expression and the corresponding strategies of aesthetic design in a way which most completely captures this urge. This approach allows for a distinction between the fundamental beliefs of each artist group that forms a trend that becomes visible in a pictorial analysis of their paintings. By means of a study of a painting trend, the respective artists' choices of visual language with which to visualize their convictions, as well as the effect each of these painting elements has, can be studied. The *Kunstwollen* analysis is against favoring one trend over another. It simply shows the various visualization approaches and the enormous potential of representation knowledge.[41]

1.1.2 Spectators of Evoked Paintings and Image Negotiation

By isolating a text passage as a painting for a moment and creating an evoked painting, the effect a painting has is simulated, that is to say, an illusion of totality and reality for the spectator is created. As soon as the narrative continues, the reader experiences the inconsistency of a representation and her own ignorance of a painting as being a deliberate arrangement. Painting elements determine the meaning of the painting from the painter's and the spectators' perspectives. "Ihre Anordnung [der dargestellten Elemente] folgt den kodifizierten Regeln des Illusionismus."[42] The selection of what to show, what not to, and how to emphasize the displayed elements conveys meaning. Whenever a

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[39] *MM* 74

[40] Cf. Reichenberger for the discussion of Alois Riegl's art historic concept

[41] This analysis does not offer an art history analysis; the art discourse "is primarily intended to illuminate literature,"[41] as Mariana Torgovnick would say, and to create a storyline through all three novels by means of the study of reactions to paintings, in the sense of how each character's attitudes are developed as a result of coming into contact with paintings, during an era in which much was happening in terms of visuality, much change was also occurring on the social level, and much of the groundwork for modern society was laid (1871-1927).

[42] Stoichita 16

pictorial indicator is identified, a frame can be set around the respective scene and illusion-creation and disillusion-realization studied in the characters and the reader.

Besides creating illusions, painting precisely also allows for special effects that startle the spectator and throw her out of an illusion. These special effects serve, on the one hand, as *pictorial indicators* and, on the other hand, as indicators of spectator response. I will call these special effects *startlers*[43], since for one, they startle and, by doing so, begin a process in the spectator – the process of rereading the scene just seen and challenging the fixed thought. *Startlers* play a crucial role in facilitating and accelerating a spectator's process of the *Bildung durch Bilder*. Moreover, they demonstrate that the higher a spectator's awareness for potential *startlers* in a visual context, the more mature the gaze.

Startler #1 is the constancy/reality illusion. Hustvedt argues that "[a] painting creates an illusion of an eternal present"[44] – of immobility, consistency of facts, and complete truths. It stops time and lets the spectator take her time to study the scene. There is truth in this claim, but Hustvedt contradicts herself saying:

> Despite the fact that a painting's elements don't change and aren't sequential, my own experience with a picture can't mirror that simultaneity. My engagement with a painting takes time and I have rarely been able to assimilate the various aspects of an image all at once.[45]

The scene does stand still, but it is not reality: it is a record of what can be believed as reality; it is representation; it is an image. A spectator will have to realize that a representation is always already the past. Reality cannot stand still.

Startler #2 is the frame-within-the-frame phenomenon. The illusion of looking at reality is not possible when there are frames within the frame that make representation the topic of a painting. The spectator is constantly reminded of the mechanism of vision and her own activity of seeing by seeing frames or maybe even other spectators in front of frames. There is a doubling of the spectator's own seeing and the characters' inside the painting. The spectator cannot maintain a safe distance outside the frame. There is an ongoing dialog between spectator and frame, "[a]uf diese Weise gelingt dem Bild das Eindringen in den Betrachterraum"[46] , and a blurred boundary of the frame, which means an *uncanny* involvement of the spectator.

Startler #3 is the mirror that reflects back. The mirror is another instrument used to blur the boundary between painting space and spectator space. "Im XVII. Jahrhundert hat der Spiegel als Synonym der *mimesis* also schon eine lange Geschichte hinter sich. Neu ist, dass er mit zusätzlichen Konnotationen bedacht wird, die aus ihm ein *semiotisches Instrument* machen."[47] There are four ways a mirror can function and adopt meaning in a painting. First, the mirror can be an empty frame and

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[43] *Startler* is my own term. It covers the uncanny moment of suddenly recognizing a formerly hidden truth – the moment is created by painting techniques. The *startler* is the technique itself.

[44] Hustvedt xv

[45] Hustvedt xvi

[46] Stoichita 16

[47] Stoichita 210

have an effect similar to a window or door frame without an image inside. Second, the mirror shows a reflection of an object/subject within the painting. “Wenn der Spiegel Darstellung (und nicht bloss eine polierte und gerahmte Fläche) sein soll, muss das dargestellte Ding vor ihm stehen, während das Ding das auf dem Gemälde und einer Karte dargestellt ist, sich stets ‘anderswo’ befindet.”[48] There is an immediacy and uncontrollable movement in a mirror reflection in the painting which impedes any stability and order in the scene. The mirror takes part in the mimesis. Third, the mirror stands for, or offers, the hidden self-portrait of the painter and thus reminds the viewer of the author of the scene, without whom seeing would be indeed impossible.[49] Fourth, the mirror, or any object that is capable of reflection, mirrors the spectator of the painting and, in a sense, stares back at her. As a consequence, the spectator is struck by an awareness of her own looking and her own voyeurism. The mirror and reflection in any of the above forms radicalize the discussion of truthfulness of representation.

Startler #4 is the *third meaning*.[50] The *third meaning* is one of Barthes’s concepts for deciphering the meaning of art. He argues that “[b]oth visual and verbal arts are interpretable; but only visual arts assume a third meaning […].[51] He sees the goal of the concept of interpretation is to “produce intellection” and that of the third meaning is a “distinguished message”, i.e., something that just is not right, does not fit in the narrative of the painting and thus “produce[s] information:”[52]

> Interpretation is an activity performed on whatever an agent is trying to grasp, to understand, engage with or “read”, whether it is something in her experience, a newspaper article, novel, cartoon, painting, drawing or sculpture. The activity is productive and creative.[53]

> The third meaning, in contrast to signs, is unstable, fugitive, and erratic, which calls for a vertical reading of the signifier, which disjoins it from the horizontal string of sign, the context, in which it appears. This disjunction disturbs, subverts, is indifferent to and discontinuous with the law of narration. […] Excessive, the third meaning appears as a supplement that intellection cannot absorb and has, Barthes says, something to do with disguise and emotion. […] he identified two elements […], *studium* (the culturally coded) and *punctum* (what unpredictably and idiosyncratically, rises up to pierce the viewer), the one obvious, the other obtuse.[54]

Interpretation equals the reading of the signs, which is the regular process of semiotics. The *third meaning* is an additional meaning, one that cannot be read, but has to be experienced, i.e., developed as a spectator.

Startler #5 is the *blind spot.*[55] Hustvedt developed a similar concept to Barthes’s in that she recognized spots in paintings that are not immediately apparent, but only reveal themselves to the

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[48] Stoichita 209

[49] Cf. Stoichita 223

[50] Cf. Barthes 1987

[51] Bittner Wiseman 20–1

[52] Bittner Wiseman 23

[53] Bittner Wiseman 20–1

[54] Bittner Wiseman 22

[55] Hustvedt xvii

spectator in time, in the sense of Barthes's *punctum*. She focuses on the role of the spectator in the perceptive error of missing meaning, assigning this to a person's blind spot in each eye which produces a "gap in our vision" which "we fill […] in with what we expect to see. Expectation, born of experience, closes the gap. […] perception is a hugely complicated neuronal process that relies on a dynamic, not fixed memory that allows us to make sense of what we see."[56] The perceived reality that is seen in a painting is not complete, but fragmented. It creates only the illusion of reality. Filling the gaps is active spectator work and the product in the sense of meaning is highly individual.

> Sometimes a perceptual error [e.g. you forget an aspect of a painting when you talk about it afterwards from memory] can unlock a painting's internal logic. Whether we know it or not, seeing is always interpretative, and the distortions of memory may reveal far more than a mere subjective gaffe. They can uncover an aspect of the work that had hitherto gone unseen or was "seen" unconsciously.[57]

Realizing a perceptual error is a moment of surprise, i.e., a *startler* moment, as well as a moment of learning.

Spectators view the painting arrangement with a fragmented gaze.[58] Realizing that one's gaze is, in fact, fragmented, is a sign of gained consciousness and increased maturity in a spectator. Indeed, as the narrator of *Middlemarch* claims, "…the vision of life represents […] the projected morality", i.e., the projection of the spectator's moral state.[59] Arnheim offers a biological explanation for the selective nature of the gaze. He sees vision as a response to the environment and claims that "[t]he continuous response to the environment is the foundation for the working of the nervous system."[60]

> Vision is selective. In order to interpret the functioning of the senses properly, one needs to keep in mind that they did not come about as instruments for cognition's sake, but evolved as biological aids for survival. From the beginning they aimed at, and concentrated on, those features of the surroundings that made the difference between the enhancement and the impediment of life. This means that perception is purposive and selective. I have already pointed out that vision is experienced as a most active occupation.[61]

This implies that selective vision is an uncontrollable process. However, Arnheim also explains that "[a]t biologically higher levels, the choice of stimuli and the reactions to them are increasingly controlled by the individual."[62] And "[h]e found that all humans are equipped with a capacity for

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[56] Hustvedt xix

[57] Hustvedt xviii

[58] Cf. „fragmentierter Blick" from Brosch 27

[59] *MM* 45

[60] Arnheim 19

[61] Arnheim 19

[62] Arnheim 23

identifying and creating visual order in the world."[63] He thus grants human vision individuality and influence.

Painting and seeing are selective. Seeing is also about making a choice about the representation, even if the choice is less conscious than the painter's. In this sense, seeing turns into the task of visual understanding described by Arnason in the following terms:

> Under natural conditions, vision has to cope with more than one or two objects at a time. […] In a typical life situation, a person concentrates on some selected areas and items or on some overall features while the structure of the remainder is sketchy and loose. Under such circumstances, shape perception operates partially.
>
> It is in works of art, for example, in paintings, that one can observe how the sense of vision uses its power of organization to the utmost. When an artist chooses a given site for one of his landscapes he not only selects and rearranges what he finds in nature; he must reorganize the whole visible matter to fit an order discovered, invented, purified by him. And just as the invention and elaboration of such an image is a long and often toilsome process, so the perceiving of a work of art is not accomplished suddenly. More typically, the observer starts from somewhere, tries to orient himself as to the main skeleton of the work, looks for the accents, experiments with a tentative framework in order to see whether it fits the total content, and so on. When the exploration is successful, the work is seen to repose comfortably in a congenial structure, which illuminates the work's meaning to the observer.
>
> More clearly than any other use of the eyes, the wrestling with a work of visual art reveals how active a task of shape-building is involved in what goes by the simple names of 'seeing' and 'looking.' The experience of searching a given image rather helplessly and then finding the key to what looked at first like a mere accumulation of shapes is common in good art appreciation work. Such an experience is the purest and strongest example of that active exploration of shape and visual order which goes on when anybody looks at anything.[64]

From this description, it becomes clear that seeing is only seemingly a passive occupation. Seeing, just like looking and observing, is an effort which includes the identification of recognizable visual elements and the allocation of non-recognizable ones to recognizable ones in order to make sense of the seen. Seeing, looking, and observing equal reading and interpreting. By repeatedly positioning characters in front of a painting and by doubling this experience for the reader, the idea that seeing is an individual activity which can be practiced and improved is awakened. Moreover, it facilitates opportunities for experiences from which, again, learning and new actions can be derived.

1.1.3 Characters' Images as Paintings

I would like to add another level of visuality in this analysis precisely in order to have the debate on how the questions of an ideal representation and the processing of visual information express a spectator's moral state and maturity level. It is an epistemological dimension of painting and a moral

[63] Pariser 9

[64] Arnheim 35-36

discussion of visuality in the way the characters form images, impressions, and ideas of themselves and their fellow characters in an intersubjective way – a fact that the characters know only after realizing that their views are subjective. The images produced by the characters' impressions, memories, and ideas of situations, other characters, and themselves are representable and analyzable as paintings. Accordingly, what they know and learn and how they develop their knowledge and experience becomes visible to the reader in the verbal paintings that are assigned/assignable to each character. This approach presupposes a clear focalization analysis,[65] since it assumes a spectator and her respective perspective for every text passage. This analysis makes clear why "perspective is parallel to point of view."[66] The painting perspective is made a synonym of a psychological perspective. Characters become spectators and develop towards being experts of visual art. This procedure allows us to read the novel as a series of (verbally constructed) paintings of scenes and characters – thus textual genre and landscape paintings as well as portraits – and assign a perspective (either the narrator's or one character's in particular) so that it becomes clear how individual characters deal with art and images.

At the core of this discussion lies the idea that every visualization is subjective and inter-subjective understanding (*egoistic viewing*[67]) necessarily means traversing the frame of those images that individual characters form of themselves and others. "Viewing is a transactional process,"[68] the transaction being between the spectator and the represented object. Every character, the narrator, and the reader – depending on the identified focus in a scene – propose a form of representation of the scene and characters. Inevitably, there is a negotiation of images and frames. *A posteriori knowledge* – learning in retrospect in an epistemological sense[69] – is gained when one's character's representation is challenged by other representations and she is to re-read scenes and images, i.e., previously sketched paintings. This further knowledge about her former images is then gained through the experience of the senses. It is assumed that characters learn in this way in the novels. And it is the authors' goal that readers learn from the experiences the characters undergo.

Characters' perceptions become visible to the reader as verbally created paintings and remain in an onlooker's mind as images; change in the characters and change in their relationship with other characters is discussed as change in their visual perception, which again manifests itself in verbal paintings and is stored as images. I will speak of *painting* when frame and painting elements are used to describe and analyze a situation or point of view. I will refer to *image* when the emphasis lies on the claim that all ideas are perception and describable as a painting scene in the novel. In the visible change in perception – the verbal paintings that are drawn or the images phrased – learning and the degree of self-consciousness is made visible. Learning takes place in the sense of

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[65] Cf. Genette's narrative concept of focalization

[66] Torgovnick 10

[67] Cf. Arnheim 19 for individual and selective vision and Brosch 27 for fragmented gaze

[68] Helmers 68

[69] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 145

consciousness building, and learning and consciousness building are to be understood as a result of interaction, i.e., the negotiation of images.

From dialectical phenomenology, the Hegelian claim that knowledge materializes as an "effect of discourse" [70] specifies the thought that inner views not yet conscious come out in interaction. One firmly-believed reality clashes with another reality and a new, further developed, reality emerges. Reality is not a given, but constructed through experience. Reality in this analysis stands for what characters see and know and understand to be a complete truth until they recognize that their reality is only their own individual representation of what they see and know.

Unconscious knowledge is stored within each person like a treasure of images stored within oneself.[71] Elisabeth Bronfen in the Hegel chapter in *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht* calls this inner, not yet negotiated, knowledge the "pure self:"

> [Die] Erfahrung eines reinen Selbst jenseits aller symbolischen und phänomenologischen Bezüge zur Welt ruft jene monströsen Gestalten wach, die die Vernunft der Aufklärung in den Bereich des Schlafs verbannt. Sie eröffnet aber zugleich auch die Möglichkeit für die Rückkehr in einen neuen Tag, den nun eine höhere, differenziertere Stufe des Bewusstseins auszeichnet. / In seiner *Differenzschrift* (1801) hatte Hegel bereits eine Entsprechung zwischen der Nacht und dem Absoluten, als Denkfigur für den Ursprung jeglicher Entfaltung des Geistes, entworfen. Auf die Frage nach den Voraussetzungen der Philosophie nennt er als erste das Absolute. Diese untrennbare Tonalität bildet das „Ziel, das gesucht wird", und somit den endgültigen Ausgangspunkt jeglicher Manifestationen des Bilderschatzes, das das reine Selbst in sich birgt. So führt die gesamte Bewegung des Geistes zu einem Absoluten, das zugleich auch den Ursprungsort ausmacht, dem das Spiel der mannigfaltigen Gestaltungen der Vorstellungen entspringt. Hegels dialektische Konzeption der Entwicklung des Geistes besagt, dass die Geistesbewegung spiralenartige Zyklen der Selbstbestimmung durchläuft, um auf einer höheren Ebene zu jenem Absoluten zurückzukehren, von dem sich sein Denken ursprünglich herausgebildet hat. Erst nachträglich stellt sich heraus, dass dieses alles synthetisierende Ziel von Anfang an schon vorhanden gewesen sein muss […]. Im Verlauf des Gangs durch alle möglichen Denk- und Wissensformen hindurch produziert die Vernunft lediglich dieses immer schon existente Absolute, indem sie das Bewusstsein von den Beschränkungen befreit und somit zum vollen Bewusstsein führt. […] Die Bewegung des Geistes führt also von einem unbeschränkten, aber noch unbewussten reinen Selbst über eine Vielzahl von zu durchlaufenden Beschränkungen. Diese kommen einem Gewinn an Bewusstsein gleich […].[72]

Learning and development takes place in cycles. A Hegelian cycle consists, first of all, of illusion and unknowingness; secondly, of clash and realization (disillusion and materialization of newly gained knowledge); and lastly, of a more mature display of reality and images. It is a process that repeats itself numerously. The lifting of limitations equals experience that is knowledge that has become visible and applicable for a subject. Phenomenological thought implies that experience is a

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[70] Cho 7

[71] Cf. Bronfen *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht* 106

[72] Bronfen *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht* 107

requirement for knowledge and experience is gained through perceptions and emotions. [73] It is, in fact, a Platonian, Kantian, and Hegelian understanding that reality can only be captured through experiences of the senses. Consciousness is gained when the process of how consciousness is gained is understood.[74] An examination of human behavior gives a clearer view and understanding of how human beings work and how individual perspectives that are based on the unconscious inner perspective influence the outcome of an image – be it of a scene, another character, or also the *Selbstbild*.[75] The more knowledge gained about the inner images, the easier it becomes to form truthful images of other characters too.

Bronfen's discussion of the pure self is, of course, beside a Hegelian analysis, a deeply psychoanalytical concern. A psychoanalytical approach to the question of how consciousness is gained in interaction is also applied in this analysis, namely to understand the moment of the clash and the confrontation with other representations of scenes, situations, or characters. In focus is the *Selbstbild*. The creation of the *Selbstbild*, not only images of other characters, works with an externalization and materialization moment as described in the Hegelian cycle. The concept that applies here is Lacan's *mirror stage*.[76] One is conscious of oneself only when an image of oneself is reflected to us. Previously unconscious information about oneself is externalized when visible in a mirror or any reflection that another character holds up for a spectator. Another character thus puts so far unknown elements into language, a frame. By that, a spectator sees what others see in her by having it mirrored back to her. A very brief description of Lacan's notion of the mirror stage reads as follows:

> At the very moment when the ego is formed by the image of the other, narcissism and aggressivity are correlatives. Narcissism, in which the image of one's own body is sustained by the image of the other, in fact introduces a tension: the other in his image both attracts and rejects me.[77]

Lacanian mirror stage describes how and when the ego is formed and the conscious subject born by means of a confrontation with another's image of one's personality. Narcissism thus acts as an externalization of an inner image. The topic of the link between seeing and being seen in the same way, as described above, comprises a great part of the analysis of the three novels: when characters realize that they are seen and see this representation, they become more aware of seeing and the responsibility of seeing and being a spectator altogether – also for the establishing of their *Selbstbild*. Consciousness is constructed in the mirror stage moment – in the most extreme form of interaction.

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[73] Cf. Menon 172

[74] Cf. *Hegel on Self-Consciousness* 9

[75] Cf. Orbe 750

[76] Cf. Lacan "The Mirror Stage as a Formative of the Function of the I" par. 1

[77] Julien 34

1.2 The Triptych of Dorothea's, Isabel's, and Lily's Development Processes

The stories of Dorothea Brooke, Isabel Archer, and Lily Briscoe are treated as three case studies that discuss how the female characters enforce their high ideals and ambitions and whether at all they put these ideals into practice. Their development processes provide a discussion of the connection between gaze refinement and freedom of action in connection with a group in society – women – that is on the verge of becoming more conscious subjects and by means of which consciousness building and autonomy gain can be examined.[78] I chose what I consider an interesting challenge to tackle this question not in the traditional way of focusing on the female object in the frame of a male gaze, but to integrate this new aspect of an influence of the strength of the female's own gaze on men's representation of the women.

Three basic theses underlie the triptych and this analysis. 1) *Middlemarch* can be read as a model of a development process; that is to say, a model can be superimposed on the narrative as a whole, and Dorothea Brooke's story in particular, by means of which is demonstrated how self-efficacy is coordinated and communicated with the surrounding pictorial world (*Bildwelt*) and the images of her. 2) For the successful execution of moral learning, the heroines need to go through the modeled process. Knowing the process in theory does not produce any knowledge or experience for them. The *Portrait of a Lady* and Isabel Archer's story as well as *To the Lighthouse* and Lily Briscoe's story are tests of the applicability of the model on other stories. 3) The most refined form of the result of the modeled process is an individual way of looking at situations and characters and thus the provision of a developed and concrete form of one's view and energy – the heroine's own ideas and convictions that are brought into a society's discourse.

In Section 2 is discussed how Dorothea provides a model of a development process by means of images (for a *Bildung durch Bilder*). She follows the necessary steps to become a subject that is able to act in society since she refines her gaze and judgment capability. Through her story, it can be shown that such a development process is only possible when a subject is capable of seeing, grasping, and understanding situations, other characters, and herself in paintings/images; when thus forced to look closely and constantly develop her visual capabilities. A step from illusions to realization via a shock moment is illustrated by the model. As soon as the heroine starts to look at situations and characters as if they were the objects of paintings and takes the time to read and re-read the scene, she sees more; she understands more clearly; she becomes a better judge of what her role and effect can be within a social framework; and she starts to take action. In this sense, Dorothea's construction of her *Selbstbild*[79] is discussed as a construction by means of an orientation towards paintings.

A model enables me to compare Dorothea's story and experiences with other heroines' stories and thereby test whether certain steps in the process have validity not only in Dorothea's context, but beyond. Moreover, a model provides a structure that is recognizable within the heat of the action of the novel and facilitates learning in the midst of the chaos of life. It helps for the "organization

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[78] Cf. Cho 2

[79] In the sense of her own image of herself, in her visualization of self-perception and self-concept

of complexity."[80] As soon as the laws of the structure are recognized in connection with practical examples on the diegetic level, the reader reaches a new level of experience. The reader is allowed to watch the process on Dorothea and understand her lot in life and the process in retrospect. A model does not intend to show reality, but to give an opportunity to think about a learning process in a structured way. In this analysis, Dorothea's process is abstracted in as much as that it become comparable and testable in other novels. The possibility of a transformation of Dorothea's learning onto another character or the reader, is subject to discussion in the following sections. Its applicability and what rules there are for successful applications can be derived from the later heroines, Isabel and Lily.

A first test of the model in terms of its coherence as well as transformational power will be undertaken with Isabel in Section 3. This corresponds to the second of the three basic theses, namely that applying the model means to live the process and not to copy it. It is the same model, but in order to orient themselves, a different pictorial world is necessary. Isabel Archer's and Lily Briscoe's stories indicate that this process cannot be applied as a guideline or check list. It has to be experienced. Isabel and Lily precisely prove that mere copying of Dorothea's story does not yield the later heroines any gaze refinement or freedom of action. The process, the structure, needs to be understood and its existence recognized in their particular everyday situations through the individual actions and development process of both characters. The texts show that every heroine needs to become aware of the impact of her own image of herself and her self-efficacy on other characters with these images, as well as understanding that a negotiation of these images with other characters' is, first, a requirement and, secondly, a chance to develop knowledge and experience.

Isabel's experiences can be considered an attempt to copy the model and apply what Dorothea has already learned without using her ambition to make her own experiences.[81] Isabel's ambition is to maintain independence and freedom of decision at all times and in every relationship, a demand that Dorothea has already articulated, but which, according to Isabel, was too radical a proposition for previous heroines to be allowed to experience. Isabel does not see a need to learn in order for her ambition to grow and gain force. Her story shows that true learning and influence gaining by simply watching others go through the process is doubtful.

In fact, constant learning and development would be most necessary for Isabel, since her story is set in an even more complex and challenging world than Dorothea's, in which orientation and the capability of reading images and creating truthful representation are an even greater challenge. Pippin comments on Isabel's striving towards independence and her struggle in creating an individual *Selbstbild* amidst the complexity of modern life:

> Die ausserordentliche Komplexität der sozialen Wirklichkeit oder der Zusammenhang zwischen dem Gehalt jeder Selbstwahrnehmung und der Erfahrung des Wahrgenommenwerdens droht offenbar, in Verbindung mit dem Umfang und der Vielschichtigkeit materieller Abhängigkeiten in der

[80] Trotter 38

[81] From Isabel's fondness of English and European novels it can be deduced that she knows about lots like Dorothea's [cf. James. *The Portrait of a Lady* (henceforth referred to as *PL)* …].

> Moderne, die Integrität des Selbst in seine soziale Verfassung aufzulösen. Immer die Absichten anderer zu internalisieren, sich selbst nur als eine Ansammlung solcher Ansichten zu verstehen oder so wesentlich von anderen abzuhängen, dass die eigenen Tage und Leidenschaften (selbst die Liebe) nicht als etwas Eigenes erfahren werden könnte, sondern nur als „ihre", als das, „was sie verlangen", bedeutet, dass man die erste Bedingung für ein würdiges Leben nicht erfüllt hat: dass es mein Leben ist und als solches erfahren wird.[82]

Isabel fights those images of her provided by society and fights to achieve her own images within society, but does not achieve an autonomous one. It is not possible to escape the modelled process although she knows about Dorothea's illusions and consequences. Each character has to make her own experience. Experience cannot be anticipated.

Knowing that learning is a process and seeing how it works helps one more easily go through the experience for oneself; it does not mean, however, that the process is not necessary anymore. The dilemma at the core of all James's novels remains: his characters are never completely free because although learning makes them free, it only happens in retrospect; that is to say, always too late. In James's understanding, uncertainty and suspense are part of modern life.[83] A fulfilment of Isabel's dream is not possible in the way she sketched it for herself. Isabel stands for the new moral that is unlike that of the Old World.[84] Nevertheless, James furnishes her life as a world where there is no creative power.[85] He leaves a slightly less optimistic image than George Eliot of the possibilities his characters have once they recognize their own ambitions and develop and transform them into concrete and feasible ambitions – which is the result of the modeled process. If learning does not happen and is not used, a subject falls back in her development – since if not moving forwards, she automatically moves backwards. Isabel's freedom of action manifests itself in the task of giving meaning to a complex world with even stronger entanglements in the social web than in Dorothea's world. Since James's characters often do not get a chance to learn for themselves in order to attain achievements in the novels, one can say that their learning is for society by building overall knowledge in a Hegelian sense through the voice of literature – a moral educational aspect of art in a Ruskinian sense.[86]

Finally, there is Lily's appropriation of the model in Section 4 which allows for the exemplification of the third of the three basic theses: the heroines need to be able to come up with and demonstrate their own images – in the form of visual language in the novels – in order to have influencing power. The task of an artist, a painter, is the visualization of the practice of developing an individual gaze and individual form of representation. Lily's story makes very clear that a visible product of her own gaze refinement can only be brought into existence by actively trying out forms of representation, gaining more and more experience with it, and making this process public. By making

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[82] Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 144

[83] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 146

[84] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 147

[85] Pippin *Moral und Moderne* ("Fehlen einer generativen Kraft")

[86] Cf. Landow "John Ruskin – Introduction" par. 28

her learning visible, she suggests change and provides a concrete way of how this change can take shape. She thus illustrates that the modeled process is, at the same time, a learning and an individualization process. This artist's creativity does not only raise awareness of how learning through gaze refinement takes place, but what can be done with the realized pieces of information and knowledge. Furthermore, this artist's practices serve as a *mise en abyme* for the spectator of the novel – the reader – to reflect on the power of art (painting and literature) for the learning and individualization process.

The entire text circles around Lily's individual representation of the scene that shows Mrs. Ramsay and her son at their summer home near the Lighthouse. Lily's painting of Mrs. Ramsay is an alternative to the way her husband and male society in general see the woman and the theme of mother and son. By that Lily makes the conflict and the representation of the conflict that exists in all three novels very explicit: the conflict takes shape as a negotiation between classical, religious, allegorized paintings vs. present-day representations of the female characters. Lily is a spectator who fights for a truthful and not an idealized[87] representation of Mrs. Ramsay, a respectable wife and mother. Lily's ambition is to find a way to unify high ambitions and high ideals and thus bring such high ambitions and high ideals to life and increase their effect on the development of society. She wonders if there is not more to the woman than the classical beauty and the traditional role that all male spectators are willing and able to grasp – classical beauty being the subject of traditional high art and the role of wife and mother embodying a traditional and well-respected place in society, and thus comfortable to watch. Lily's study is of Mrs. Ramsay, who presents such a traditional image of a woman. In Victorian times, a world intensely discussed in Woolf's novel, prestigious artworks that showed the Madonna and classical beauties to express the beauty and goodness in people were still the most respected form of art. The topic of classical, idealized and restricting understanding of women is discussed by means of an analysis of the lack of power and flexibility in expression through classical symbolism in a modern society and to modern spectators – both female and male.

Lily is a painter, which is a modern activity for a woman, and her painting offers an answer to the complexity of modern life and the need for forms that give room for a more varied range of ideals for modern individuals. By painting, she makes sense of what she sees. She is given creative power and Woolf lets the reader be a part in the process of giving order to the chaos of human relationships. Lily is granted a platform for experimentation and her processing of information, as well as her attempts at representing the same, are made visible. Her painting of Mrs. Ramsay and her son, James, is finished in retrospect and from memory. Mrs. Ramsay has already died, which makes it clear that her painting is about Lily's own positioning in society; and the positioning of the topic of activity in women. The metaphor of image making and image negotiation among characters in the two earlier novels is made explicit in Woolf's text.

[87] Cf. Witemeyer "History Painting and Idealization" for idealism in history and allegorical paintings

Only Lily and William Bankes, Lily's companion with whom she often exchanges thoughts and who clearly digs deeper than Mr Ramsay and the other male characters in the novel, are concerned with what this woman is made of:

> But was it nothing but looks? […] What was there behind it – her beauty, her splendour? […] Or was there nothing? nothing but an incomparable beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing to disturb? For easily though she might have said at some moment of intimacy when stories of great passion, of love foiled, of ambition thwarted came her way how she too had known or felt or been through it herself, she never spoke. She was silent always. She knew then – she knew without having learnt. Her simplicity fathomed what clever people falsified. Her singleness made her drop plumb like a stone, alight exact as a bird, gave her, naturally, this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained – falsely perhaps. /
>
> 'Nature has but little clay,' said Mr Bankes once, hearing her voice on the telephone, and much moved by it thought she was only telling him a fact about a train, 'like that of which she moulded you.' He saw her at the end of the line, Greek, blue-eyed, straight-nosed. How incongruent it seemed to have joined hand in meadows of asphodel to compose that face. […] /
>
> But she is no more aware of her beauty than a child,' said Mr Bankes, replacing the receiver and crossing the room to see what progress the workmen were making with an hotel which they were building at the back of his house. And he thought of Mrs Ramsay as he looked at that stir among the unfinished walls. For always, he thought, there was something incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face. She clapped a deer-stalker's hat on her head; she ran across the lawn in galoshes to snatch a child from mischief. So that if it was her beauty merely one thought of, one must remember the quivering thing, the living thing (they were carrying bricks up a little plank as he watched them), and work it into the picture; or if one thought of her simply as a woman, one must endow her with some freak of idiosyncrasy; or suppose some latent desire to doff her royalty of form as if her beauty bored her and all that men say of beauty, and she wanted only to be like other people, insignificant. He did not know. He did not know. He must go to his work.) /
>
> Knitting her reddish-brown hairy stocking, with her head outlined absurdly by her gilt frame, the green shawl which she had tossed over the edge of the frame, and the authenticated masterpiece of Michael Angelo, Mrs Ramsay smoothed out what had been harsh in her manner a moment before, raised [her son's] head, and kissed her little boy on the forehead. […][88]

William Bankes reflects on Mrs. Ramsay's personality – which I will refer to as inner life – that includes all her experiences, ideas, and expectations, which cannot possibly be captured with a static frame. All the described movements of emotions are within Mrs. Ramsay, even when she sits silent and still in a frame of a classical painting as a Greek beauty from the mythological asphodel meadows. The repeated 'but' implies that the above train of thoughts about façade and the inner life of Mrs. Ramsay is a reaction to another point of view that is generally accepted – that of Mr. Ramsay who sees a "masterpiece of Michael Angelo" in the display of his wife together with their young son. A Lessinite dichotomy of, put in one way, nature vs. the "clay" of art and sculpture or the "bricks" of architecture, which both represent culture, and, put another way, the movement of the narrative vs. the fixedness of

[88] Woolf. *To the Lighthouse* (henceforth referred to as *TL*) 34-36

the visual arts is introduced. Just as in *Middlemarch*, a character named William is able to see more in the female characters than his fellow male characters and he also encourages the heroine to do something with this 'material' and to unlock this potential. He himself could not do it; his view is still too much embedded in tradition. By combining his watching of a building being constructed while remedying the composition of Mrs. Ramsay's face in his mind and by claiming that always 'something incongruous', he implicitly demands that something lively, needs to be part of a beautiful and perfect work thus challenging artworks that are rigid.

Lily likewise sees the incongruence and absurdity in a static representation of Mrs. Ramsay. She recognizes that other characters suggest a frame for the woman that does not do all her personality justice, since it fails to display the woman's inner life: her memories, experience, and expectations. According to the female painter, the "living things" in Mrs. Ramsay are locked and hidden in a fixed frame of an incomplete composition. A polished, "smoothed out," still, and idealized surface is a requirement of a classical beauty in a classical artwork. After Mrs. Ramsay's agitation with her son, her emotions are polished away and she goes back to being a traditional (not a modern) Madonna figure taking care of her little boy. She no longer 'disturbs' her beautiful appearance and the complexity of her personality is reduced to simplification in the appearance of a 'Grace.' The green cloth reference in the description of the scene could be an allusion to the Sistine Madonna, although it is the artist Michelangelo who is mentioned, not Raphael.[89]

Figure 2 *The Sistine Madonna* by Raphael.[90]

[89] Cf. The "gilt frame [and] the green shawl which she had tossed over the edge of the frame" of the portrait of Mrs. Ramsay describe a scene that could be taken out of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*.

[90] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://grandearte.net/raphael/sistine-madonna>

Dorothea's, Isabel's, and Mrs. Ramsay's appearances as saints and mythological figures, and thus classical beauties, will be closely examined and the claim will be made that spectators will regard these women with reverence in the light of their being portrayed as saints as classical beauty, and therefore, if these women's ambitions are revealed through other, less sacred, forms of representation, then those ambitions will appear less noble.

I will argue that, according to Lily (and supposedly to Virginia Woolf), a woman locked in the frame of beauty and tradition cannot be the result of learning paths like those of Dorothea and Isabel. Female characters in *To the Lighthouse* have read *Middlemarch*, but not completed it. They "had left the third volume of Middlemarch in the train and […] never knew what happened in the end […]."[91] They have never reached the stage in which a reflection on Dorothea's decisions and experiences and thus learning in retrospect would have been possible but did not happen – no creative and development power was established. The model is only successful when applied by Lily.

Woolf chooses a heroine in Lily who can comment on representation and has a voice. It is as if the heroine had abstracted the *Awakening Conscience Model* and become capable of acting through applying an attentive and nuanced gaze and being granted brush, canvas, and easel – pictorial and formal painting elements – for the negotiation of images. The novel as a whole is a discussion of how representation comes into being and how producing and reading visual information is connected with the state of the characters' and readers' moral development. Lily's painting is a meditation on pre-defined objects and frames. The heroine has an influence on the outcome of the image within the plot, and does not leave reflection open for the reader and supposedly later generations. Conclusions are not only drawn by the reader of the novel but by Lily herself, and made known through Lily's voice. The question remains whether this explicit meditation has a stronger effect on readers than an implicit one.

Three authors analyze the topic of female agents and, in doing so, develop their own consciousness and shape a modern image of the woman which allows for an analogy of the emergence and excellence of an artist to illustrate their agency. For being inexperienced image negotiators at first, the image of the "frail vessels" that are bumped around by other vessels without having a clear path was mentioned by Henry James in his Preface to the *Portrait of a Lady*, presented as a term coined by George Eliot,[92] according to him, and then continued in "frail barks" and "frail shapes" that these frail vessels create in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.[93] Dorothea, Isabel, and Lily all develop an awareness of a negotiation and develop their ability to participate – which can be considered a fight against their frailty. Learning for all three heroines means being aware of their own ambition in negotiations with other characters, in the sense of finding out about the quality of their ambition, i.e., whether it serves a greater good or is complacent, and the practicability of their ambition, i.e., whether and how they can implement their understanding. There is, in this sense, a development process within and among the three novels. I will argue that each heroine somehow

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[91] *TL* 113

[92] Cf. Preface 49

[93] *TL* 6, 167

comments on the earlier heroine and thereby on the development of emancipation in the time span between the novels. Eliot's novel came into being in a Victorian context; James's offers more modern traces; and Woolf's is radically modern – this in terms of artistic language displayed in the texts and the heroines' reasoning about experience. Out of the three cases, the *Bildung-durch-Bilder*-Triptychon can be formed to discuss each heroine's and with it the text's "individual effort [that is] essential to human progress and women as the special agents of the process [...]"[94] and the development of [...] the narrative of 'a young lady's entry into the world.'"[95]

In the triptych, Dorothea starts a new discourse; Isabel is on the threshold and shows how difficult it is to form an own *Selbstbild* that goes beyond mere breaking open of conventions; and Lily makes it furthest by suggesting her own artistic language. The rupture of conventions is the first step which can be discussed in a feminist discourse and, at the same time, in an art discourse. The triptych goes a step further than breaking with tradition and investigates the "new figuration of feminine subjectivity"[96] and a "strategic positionality" of the woman in a modern society.[97] All three heroines strive for an ideal and thereby fall into idealization before they find their own realism. Chapter 2 of *Middlemarch* is introduced by a Cervantes quote from *Don Quixote*. In the scene, realist character Sancho Pansa together with his master Don Quixote talk about a man approaching on either a horse or a donkey, depending on the perspective:

> 'Seest thou not yon cavalier who cometh toward us on a dapple-grey steed, and weareth a golden helmet?' 'What I see,' answered Sancho, 'is nothing but a man on a grey ass like my own, who carries something shiny on his head.' 'Just so,' answered Don Quixote: 'and that resplendent object is the helmet of Mambrino.'[98]

The novels studied in this analysis, just like Cervantes's novel, present the danger of illusion and the dehumanizing, misjudging visualization of the others. However, they also discuss the power of a vision – if vision is not illusion. Both aspects of vision – illusion and imagination/creation – are intrinsic to Quixote's nature which makes this character of early modernism such an illustrative figure. The triptych developed in this analysis is, in this manner, not only an illustration of a development process of consciousness, but also a development process of influencing power. The three cases show that to find and also to solidify one's own realism, interaction is necessary. They also show that one's realism needs to be made plausible and visible so that it can be accepted at all. In addition, they stress the necessity of invention, innovation, and change.

This analysis distinguishes itself from other studies that were concerned with the woman question in a Victorian and modern context in that it focuses on the woman's creative gaze instead of only on the limiting male gaze. In addition, it distinguishes itself from other studies that were preoccupied with the question of visual arts in narratives in that the visual arts are used as an

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[94] Ashton xix

[95] Duncan 4

[96] Cho 9

[97] Cho 9

[98] *MM* 16

analytical tool, not as a decorative element. Interaction is exclusively analyzed in terms of drawing images of each other and these images are presented as paintings with painting elements. A last differentiating factor is that this analysis aims at providing a theoretical framework and a visually tangible structure (in the modeled process) that reflects the content.

Each section on each of the three heroines' development processes (2-4) studies their attitude towards art, their performing of the modeled process as well as their conclusions from it and is divided into the same three parts in all sections as depicted in Table 2. In a structured way, each novel's knowledge transformation power is studied. The three parts are 1) an art discourse, 2) a model discourse, and 3) an applicability discourse. The goal of the art discourse it to present the authors' preferences in art that form the background against which they developed their heroines and a pictorial world on which the heroines orient themselves for the establishing of their *Selbstbild*. The heroines' illusion of how they are and can be seen in society is elaborated on by means of the art discourse the heroines have themselves – their own artistic preferences vs. the classical beauties that are accepted forms of representation for them. In the model discourse, this development and orientation is captured by a modeled process. Each heroine's story helps specify and further clarify the model. The applicability discourse looks at the processes of the heroines as reactions to previous development processes which allows for the question of how the process serves as common knowledge and a guideline for future applications.

Part of the Analysis	Content
1. Art Discourse	• Art preferences of the authors • Art historical explanations for the description of the heroine's background and explanation of her views; to be able to see her before a background and understand her views (an interaction theoretical approach) • Situating the piece in the Bildung-durch-Bilder triptych by establishing a connection with the previous novel • Preparing the model discourse of the novel
2. Model Discourse	• Development of the model or appropriation 1 or 2 • Discussion – by means of the model – of each heroine's consciousness and autonomy building process • Take-aways from each model discussion for the determining and further specification of the modeled process
3. Applicability Discourse	• Learnings about the model from this heroine • Specifics of this heroine's learning process • Contribution of the novel to the debate of the gaining of consciousness that leads, if used, to the gaining of autonomy

Table 2 Structure of sections 2-4 (own illustration)

Only by means of a synchronous discussion of the three stories in the three sections can they be truly compared and can a contribution from all stories be given to the question of the interaction of seeing and being recognized.

2 The Awakening Conscience – A Development Process by Means of Images

George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–72) provides the setting for the discussion of a young woman's awakening conscience process in a modern society in terms of her ability to recognize her *Selbstbild*[99] and create it as an alternative to other characters' images of her. With Dorothea's story "George Eliot undertakes a philosophical enlargement of the Austenian theme of 'moral stupidity' [...]."[100] Thereby, Dorothea introduces the theme of the intellectually conscious female character fighting for acceptance – that of society and her own. Dorothea senses that feminine conventions lack meaning and purpose for the intellectually developed women of the time and that it is difficult for women like her to find fulfillment as a result. The young woman struggles with reconciling the roles envisaged for her with a hunger for learning and for certain intellectual and creative freedoms, as well as with finding a useful purpose in life and a place in society that complies with her moral and religious standards.

Her ambition is deeply rooted in religious and Puritan thought. She wants to do good, but she wants to exert a greater and more independent influence with the good she contributes. She wants to actively take part in the development of society by helping the poor, for instance. Several times, however, Dorothea falls back into not wanting to be exposed to society and judgement because an independent behavior means to deviate from a religious symbol of the unambitious, piteous, silent moral beauty. She will have to learn to live and want to live as a modern women who faces challenging reactions and needs to find moral guidance in another source than fixed religious conventions.

An analogy to her fight with traditions in society can be found in her painting preferences: she objects to Renaissance (high-tradition) art which is very present in her life and favors social realist visual language – the countryside and the peasants of her uncle's estate. It takes her a long time, however, to be able to articulate in what way reality should be represented from her point of view. Attaining artistic power and an artistic language becomes the metaphor of gaining autonomy in society which is only possible by knowing others' view.

2.1 Dorothea's Vocation Captured in Artistic Language not Understood

Dorothea's art discourse shows her struggle, and yet fascination, with conventional art as well as her lack of an alternative. She feels a gap between what she sees in paintings and the views on nature and the peasants in the countryside which she initially fails to fill. The casts and pictures at her uncle's house appear puzzling to her: "[t]o poor Dorothea these severe classical nudities and smirking Renaissance-Correggiosities were painfully inexplicable, staring into the midst of her Puritanic

[99] In the sense of her own image of herself, in her visualization of self-perception and self-concept

[100] Duncan 4

conceptions…."[101] With her Puritan views, she cannot understand allegorical art that often works with Catholic symbolism. It is made known early in the novel that Dorothea "loved the fresh air and the various aspects of nature"[102] – the only evoked painting of these aspects that she beholds in a hypothetical painting can be found when she is in Rome, feeling oppressed by the allegorical representations found in Renaissance art, and there is a memory of "the English fields and elms and hedge-bordered highroads [...] filled with joyful devotedness"[103]. This is a private view and consequently unknown to other characters.

Dorothea makes no secret of her incomprehension of these paintings. From the very beginning, she thus degrades herself as a judge of such high culture topics as art, a positioning which caused her to struggle with acceptance of her ideals. Her position at this time can be described as non-existent: she does not look at allegorical paintings and she does not create a visual language that uses matter/material of the present day and which allows the delivery of a message with forms that are understandable and that create response. It is in fact both – the classical written language and the classical visual language – that she does not understand. However, her incomprehension seems to bother her in paintings to a greater extent than it does in texts.

> I am no judge of these things. I never see the beauty of those pictures which are so much praised. They are a language I don't understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel – just as [Mr. Casaubon sees] what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me.[104]

She feels a gap between art and reality and struggles with this discrepancy. Dorothea is not ready to fill in the gaps herself with learnedness, but requires smaller gaps between art and her reality. For her, the Renaissance-Correggiosities in her uncle's house stand in absolute contrast to everyday life. They invoke a reality that is contrary to the reality that Dorothea sees when she steps out of the house. Inside the house and inside the frame, she does not find every aspect represented that she recognizes outside. Implicitly, she asks for realist representations and complains about allegorized classical paintings that use religious or mythological symbols to convey meaning, expressing her aversion to those paintings in the following terms:

> I used to come from the village with that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within me, and the simpering pictures in the drawing room seemed to me like a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false, while we don't mind how hard the truth is for the neighbours outside our walls.[105]

In her mind, it is clear that paintings are supposed to represent exactly what can be seen and experienced in nature and that paintings that manipulate the truth by representing it in an unrecognizable way are sinful. Her lack of understanding of Renaissance paintings stems from her

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[101] *MM* 74

[102] *MM* 10

[103] *MM* 202

[104] *MM* 79

[105] *MM* 389

ignorance of the meanings of their religious symbols and her lack of knowledge of the language of painting in general. As a result, she fails to grasp the religious and moral values that these paintings are meant to inspire in the spectator and that Dorothea herself naturally expects to find in pieces of art.

Heroism and idealization of catholic art stands in contrast with the Puritanism in Realist art which corresponds to Dorothea's ideals. She "…demonstrates social consciousness and sympathy for the poor that are characteristics of Realism",[106] but that are of no interest in religious paintings. She says again and again that she likes the aspects of nature and the truthfulness of a life in the country that embody hard and honest labor. The discrepancy between the scenes presented to her in paintings and those she experiences in her life raises the question of the meaning of what Witemeyer calls "the aestheticist view,"[107] which is the technique of presenting an object in an embellished rather than a realistic way. What Dorothea sees in Renaissance paintings, for example, is not what she has experienced herself; to her, these types of paintings, therefore, lack soul and truth. They are nude, cool, and rigid, and these aspects even frighten and repel her. Dorothea "is a Puritan with the right moral impulse who is cut off from the deeper truths of nature and history and culture because she does not know the language of art."[108] Dorothea sees Catholic art and automatically asks for more puritanical art, i.e., for images that remind her of her reality rather than of art and artificiality. For a long time in the novel she does not openly oppose this form of art, but averts her gaze from art altogether for fear of seeing her incomprehension of the conventional art exposed and for a lack of her own artistic language.

The following is Dorothea's only look at a scene that qualifies as an evoked hypothetical painting. It takes place at the end of her learning cycle as a view through her boudoir window – a scene through a frame behind a curtain that has all the qualities of a painting. This framed text passage shows that she assumes the position of spectator and self-consciously presents her ideal painting. Thematically, this scene clearly shows:

> She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving – perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining.[109]

In a later part, I will argue that this scene has realist *and* Pre-Raphaelite characteristics and that she re-encodes what she sees in actuality as a scene or painting with heroic, but also realist, traits. Dorothea has thus enforced her favored and ideal painting approach by the time she has reached a

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[106] Werner 218

[107] Witemeyer "Landscape and the Beholder" par. 74

[108] Wiesenfather 370

[109] *MM* 788

more mature state in the course of the novel. What she looks for in representation must have become clear to her in the course of the novel by the way in which she uses this knowledge for her vision of life. By means of her development of a liking for realist and Pre-Raphaelite art, her development of a clear ambition, a vision, and the realist implementation of her vision – and thereby her development of her entire personality – can and will be illustrated. Her initial orientation is towards catholic art because this is what she knows and an appreciation of which she inertly believes to be a moral requirement. A reflection of the lack of power of ideals and striving for a higher truth that she recognizes in catholic, allegorized art, she finds in the lack of impact of her own efforts in her marriage and in society. Her eventual breaking away from catholic symbolism and towards harmonizing the ideals that are at the core of catholic art display a result of her efforts. Between her initial struggle with Renaissance art and her final acquiescence of realist and Pre-Raphaelite painting much happens. Her finding a realist and then Pre-Raphaelite visual language describes her consciousness development and awakening process.

Throughout the entire novel, Dorothea searches for a vocation. I have so far only assumed that her ambition can be transformed into a visible and tangible image by means of realist language. For this to be proved or disproved, her ambition, as well as realist language, needs to be analyzed more closely. Dorothea has a hunger for learning and a desire for change. She aims at "acts of sympathy"[110] with the neighboring peasants and reforms in the landlord–peasant alliances. Dorothea is fascinated with the notion of rising above oneself because of one's own hard work and in this way echoes Eliot's own fascination that expresses 'the desirability of the individual's rising by effort to 'the highest existence.'"[111] This is both a Puritan and a social realist discourse. Dorothea has socio-democratic political ambitions for poor and less powerful people at a time when social movements were just emerging. In her mind, however, she is convinced that she merely pursues the religious goals of benevolence and charity. In other words, she fails to recognize that she is highly political and is thereby entering what is considered a male field of action. There is a clash in her understanding of her vocation as religious and men's understanding of it as secular. This clash prepares the way for the open confrontation and shock moment that is both part of her development process and which also accelerates it.

Ashton comments that "denying the young women in the novel the usual wifely function of bearing and rearing children, George Eliot raises in its starkest form the question of what women can do in modern society."[112] She implicitly asks: Are children the only thing that a woman can contribute to develop society? She places a magnifying glass on the novel's female characters to show what they do with the traditional tasks set for them.[113] Dorothea wants to live out her goals within the well-established concept of a wife and "hopes to find room for her energies in marriage to [a] learned older

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[110] Ashton xiii

[111] Ashton xix

[112] Ashton xvi

[113] The three female protagonists of *Middlemarch* are Dorothea, Rosamond (wife to the local doctor) and Mary (a poor man's daughter)

man."[114] Causabon is a scholar of the classics and much focused on classic symbolism and established norms. Casaubon's inability and unwillingness to recognize her energies and go along with her ideas and ideals, nevertheless, stop and limit her. Analogously, Dorothea does not exactly know and is not able to phrase or give a face to her ambition; so she chooses the representation of idealization. She chooses a classical, traditional figure as a husband and a classical, traditional form for herself as his wife. Dorothea is not honest with herself in her desire for intellectual work and to see the results of her efforts. Casaubon's reaction to Dorothea's attempt to mediate between her husband and his cousin is only one example of his imprisoning her in his ideals of a wife: "'Dorothea, my love, this is not the first occasion, but it were well that it should be the last, on which you have assumed a judgement on subjects beyond your scope."[115] The experience with her husband eventually makes Dorothea realize that she aspires to something that is as yet non-existent. Her husband and she herself cannot represent her as the Christian heroine of a Renaissance painting.

Eliot's realism is much discussed and seems to find an echo in Dorothea. By means of a realist discourse, the concept of inner life is established that, according to realist theory, goes missing in the idealized, polished shapes of allegorical art.

> Eliot had begun in the Wordworthian mode of pursuit of the middling truth: to strive to see by the 'light of common day,' without the lamp of faith' […]. Her model would be the 'Dutch paintings:' I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of monotonous homely existence' […]; instead of nude goddesses or madonnas, the ordinary woman at her chores might become the center of interest. In the course of her career, however, Eliot evolved her own form of philosophical and idealized realism […] as though to escape both the designation of women as aesthetic object and the relegation of women's lives to the commonplace.[116]

The study of laymen and laywomen, as opposed to those associated with religion seemed more productive and inspiring and promised to produce more sacredness in the sense of inspiring a sense of reverence and awe than any traditional image of a saint. Humility, piety and trustworthiness are ideals that Dorothea also finds in the study of the everyday. Accordingly, Dorothea -utters: "I find it is not so easy to be learned as to plan cottages."[117]

It is known that George Eliot felt positively about realist art. In fact, she is considered the novelist who "introduced realism into English fiction."[118]

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[114] *MM* 44

[115] *MM* 374

[116] Booth 112

[117] *MM* 388

[118] "Realism (art and literature)." *Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia*

> In nearly all she wrote, she kept her eyes on what she called the supremely important fact, as in her 1855 praise of the art critic John Ruskin: "The truth of infinite value that he teaches is realism – the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be obtained by a humble and faithful study of nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite substantial reality."[119]

As if voicing Dorothea's claims, Eliot studied the everyday carefully, "the palpable earthly conditions out of which any good must come,"[120] and came to the conclusion that religion "can be found in contemporary reality."[121] This led her to "praising the 'sacred' task of accurately portraying the working classes […] or attacking extravagant excursions from reality."[122] She was fascinated with characters who in the midst of palpitating life have proven moral and humble.

"George Eliot habitually idealized her characters by associating them with sacred and heroic history painting and classical sculpture"[123] – only to show that these representations never capture the essence of a character; they remain mere form. Dorothea's failure to understand classical art is only one example of the novel's claim that classical art no longer works to educate morally and spiritually. Other examples are how the many attempts to represent the characters (mainly Dorothea) as classical art figures all fall short. The characters elude the Christianizing and heroic aestheticism suggested for them in the novel.

> […] Christianizing aestheticism […] is one of the many modes of human intellection tested and found wanting in *Middlemarch*. Idealizing portraiture provides no coherent vision in this novel of incomplete insights. Ultimately Dorothea eludes all of the analogies that attempt to characterize her as Santa Clara, Santa Teresa, Santa Barbara, the Madonna, and a Christian Antigone, just as Mr. Casaubon more obviously eludes [one of the novel's artist's] vision of him as Saint Thomas Aquinas or Dorothea's comparison of him with "the portrait of Locke."'[124]

Renaissance and classical aestheticism draws on biblical, mythological, allegorical, or historical stories and represents them in an idealized and often heroic environment.[125] Realist art praises the noble, dignified, and humble in the everyday and in everyday tasks, not in an idealized surrounding nor with idealized figures. Realism stands for "devotion of duty"[126] and praise for the "poor and humble labourer."[127] It makes visible that which is represented and not only hints at it, as, from a realist perspective, in the case of classical paintings.

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[119] McKelvy 299

[120] Chase 13

[121] Witemeyer, "History Painting and Idealization of Character," par. 12

[122] McKelvy 299

[123] Witemeyer, "History Painting and Idealization of Character," par. 1

[124] Witemeyer, "History Painting and Idealization of Character," par. 40

[125] Cf. information board on "Historiengemälde," Kunsthalle der Hypokulturstiftung "Realismus – Abenteuer der Wirklichkeit"

[126] Werner 230

[127] Werner 231

George Eliot's realism has parallels with Dutch realist paintings.[128] In Vermeer, for instance, humble and honestly working female characters can be found that seem to reflect Dorothea's ideals for herself. In seventeenth-century Dutch realism, the moral and the truthful in art is discussed by means of the concept of vanity. This means that human traits rather than sublime concepts are at the center of attention. Realism facilitated emancipation from Catholic art that had lapsed into a limiting or empty form for the seventeenth- and nineteenth-century spectator. In analyzing the character of Dorothea, who proves to be a Puritan – humble, renouncing her mother's pearls, hard-working, making improvement plans for poor people's cottages – the study of Vermeer's visual and moral world is worth a look. Vermeer repeatedly deals with the topic of women's activities and tasks which were not "bloss äusserliches Tun"[129] – a topic of great concern to Eliot and for my argument. Dutch realists objected to the praising of mere form, be it in religion or in paintings. This is to be understood in the context of reformation and an intent to introduce a new moral discourse.

> Wie bei den meisten Genrebildern, die ja nicht bloss naive Abschilderungen der Realität waren, sondern immer auch besondere norm- und wertvermittelnde Appelle in handlungsverändernder Absicht einschlossen, geht es um das Problem einer Kontrolle der Sinnlichkeit, darum, dass man stets wachsam und bei klarem nüchternen Verstand bleiben solle.[130]

Not only in representation, but also in the act itself, truthfulness and honest and exemplary behavior should be seen. A truthful art - which realist art was considered to be - is best trusted to bring forth ideal and moral behavior.

Realism produced women like Vermeer's *Milkmaid* (17th-century Dutch realism) by means of which a Puritan discourse can easily be held (cf. Figure 3). Realism also produced French Realist Millet's fieldworkers, continuing the social realist and Puritan discourse of two centuries before (cf. Figure 4 and Figure 5). Eliot was familiar with both realist tendencies. The paintings are not underlying real paintings and not even real paintings that are alluded to in *Middlemarch*. However, they exemplify Dorothea's morals and goals in life. Moreover, they are relevant because by means of these two examples of realist paintings, what Dorothea does not want to be, or cannot be, may also be discussed.

In the milkmaid of Vermeer's painting the dignity of a working woman is visible and almost tangible. The woman fulfils a humble duty and is comfortable with it. She does not try to look grander than she is, but puts grandeur into her everyday task. One cannot assume she has any hidden longings. If she has, they are controlled and subordinated to her sense of duty. The spectator is invited to enter the scene and take a closer look at what is behind the surface. The table guides the spectator's view *into* the painting. The line of the flowing milk as well as the female character's concentrated gaze on the milk jug makes the spectator focus on her body and the task that fulfills her. There is no outward distraction, no hint of the outside, only the maid in an intimate moment in the spotlight of a sunbeam. Quiet spirituality lies in this painting. It is an annunciation translated into the

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[128] Demetz 97

[129] Schneider 21

[130] Schneider 24

everyday, that is to say the spiritual within the material. It is her movement and her action that is shown, so that one never assumes her seclusion from the world or from other people. The female character is set on her task and thereby shows that this task is worthy of artistic representation.

Figure 3 *The Milkmaid* by Vermeer[131]

Hornäk says about *The Milkmaid*:

> Die Quelle des Lichts ist durch das Fenster nur angedeutet. Wäre sie erkennbar, würde das Bild als Einheit weniger geschlossen wirken und äussere Einflüsse die Konzentration auf das innere Geschehen im Bild stören. Dadurch dass die Ursache des Lichtes unsichtbar ist, konzentriert sich der Blick ganz auf seine Wirkung. Vermeer hebt die Unterscheidung von Ursache und Wirkung auf. […] Die Ursache liegt nicht mehr zeitlich oder räumlich abgetrennt vor der Wirkung, sondern bleibt, insofern als die Dingwelt zu leuchten beginnt, der Wirkung innewohnend. Das Licht *erleuchtet* das Bild. / […] diese Eigenart des Lichtes [weist] auf einen spirituellen Bildsinn hin: Dieses Licht ist […] der eigentliche "Gegenstand" des Bildes. Ohne den Charakter eines überwirklichen Sonnenlichtes aufzuheben, hat es doch zugleich den Charakter eines überwirklichen Lichtes, das alle Dinge in geheimnisvoller Klarheit erscheinen lässt und lebendig und still zwischen ihnen webt. / Der hier verwendete Terminus des "überwirklichen Lichts" legt allerdings das Missverständnis nahe, das Bild verweise auf Transzendentales. Über seine natürliche und abbildende Funktion hinaus aber deutet es gerade nicht auf eine ausserhalb des Bildes angesiedelte Instanz. Das Licht leuchtet vielmehr *in* den Dingen und versinnbildlicht dadurch eine Kraft, welche die Gegenstände braucht, um sich in deren Form überhaupt erst zeigen zu können. Im Licht also findet die Immanenz das ihr adäquate Medium, insofern eine Welt konstituiert wird, in

[131] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-2344>

> Bezug auf die sich der Gegensatz von innerweltlich und ausserweltlich oder von natürlich und übernatürlich als obsolet erweist.[132]

The milkmaid captures the spectator's eye immediately. The woman in the painting has such power of expression that it is difficult not to follow her gentle and earnest movement of pouring milk. Her gaze is lowered, indicating her concentration on her task and, at the same time, a humble "In-sich-Gekehrtseins."[133] The unadorned room supports this simple act and allows it to be the heart of the scene. Schneider claims:

> Vermeer hat sich sehr oft von Sentenzen und moralischen Leitsätzen anregen lassen, wie sie in illustrierter Form in der damals massenhaft verbreiteten Emblemliteratur unter das Volk gebracht wurden. Im 16. Jahrhundert, zur Zeit ihres Aufkommens, waren die Embleme schwerverständliche, von Humanisten erklügelte Sinnbilder, die geheimnisvoll auf eine tiefere Bedeutung hinter den Dingen verweisen sollen. In den Niederlanden des 17. Jahrhunderts hatte sich ihr Charakter schon nachhaltig gewandelt: Sie wurden zunehmend leichter nachvollziehbar, und ihre volkspädagogische Funktion trat unübersehbar zutage. Sie sollten eine neue Moral begründen und durchsetzen helfen und im Sinne der im Aufbau begriffenen bürgerlichen Sozialordnung das Verhalten der Individuen formen.[134]

Following this explanation, it becomes obvious that the milkmaid embodies the type of the "geistlichen Hausmagd,"[135] a fact that is also highlighted by the imagery of milk that evokes purity and life.[136] The pouring of milk accordingly signifies the passing on of life and purity. By her act of pouring milk, her inner glow that is her inner life is turned inside out and made visible.

The Realist painting tradition of seventeenth-century Dutch realism continued in the nineteenth century – and with it the tradition of representing humble but impressive working life. Against the backdrop of political and social change, nineteenth-century social realism adopted the Vermeerian admiration for labor and the pursuit of duty, a regard for working people, and a focus on the importance of nature. In the Puritanism of Vermeer's paintings, nineteenth-century realist painters found an analogy to their goals in painting.[137] Their realism was dedicated to everyday life and the humbleness of fulfilling one's task, just like the realism in Vermeer's *Milkmaid*. The painters of the French Barbizon School were especially known for their admiration for the dignity of working-class people. J. F. Millet, whose painting examples of the Barbizon school I will choose, was unknown to George Eliot, but in Adam Bede she so clearly reflected social realism and hardship of labor that Bonnell was convinced one could not miss allusions in Eliot's art to the masters of 19th-century realism.[138] The following Barbizon paintings are not part of the diegesis of *Middlemarch*, but again a

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[132] Hornäk 232

[133] Schneider 61

[134] Schneider 91

[135] Schneider 61

[136] Schneider cf. 61

[137] Cf. Audio Guide to *Die Spitzenklöpplerin* by Vermeer, Louvre

[138] Bonnell 203

visualized explanation of the realist language that Dorothea sees when outside and misses when looking at classical paintings.

In the 19th century, the Puritan discourse of realist art is revived and continued. In reference to *The Gleaners* (cf. Figure 4) by J. F. Millet, a Barbizon painter, two of whose French realist paintings are offered as examples, one speaks of the "menschliche Erhabenheit in der Würde der Bauern."[139]

Figure 4 *The Gleaners* by J. F. Millet[140]

A tenant farmer is an unspectacular subject compared to great men of history and mythology or to saints from biblical stories. However, everything depends on the farmer. All life comes from farming. The female figures become monumental, not because they represent a monumental topic, but because their charisma, personality, and steadfastness express monumentality.[141] The workers are enlarged in this painting and given a central role – in a space formerly reserved for religious icons (cf. Figure 5).

[139] Audio Guide to *The Gleaners* by J. F. Millet, Musée d'Orsay

[140] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/search/commentaire_id/des-glaneuses-341.html?no_cache=1>

[141] Cf. Audio Guide to *Farmer Inserting a Graft on a Tree*, Neue Pinakothek

Figure 5 ***Farmer Inserting a Graft on a Tree*** **by J. F. Millet**[142]

Realist art uses the visual language of the everyday and thus humanizes that representation. As a matter of course, it makes the representation about the spectator. It lifts any safe barrier between artwork and spectator and makes the spectator deal with what she sees. It makes her look closely and feel an effect. It breaks up a comfortable separation between what she sees and what concerns her and takes away all possible excuses not to respond to the representation. "To hallow everyday communal life with a sense of natural religiousness was a primary goal of George Eliot's fiction [...]. Her genre pictorialism therefore emphasizes the values of harmony, order, and love in the visual tradition which she inherited."[143] When Dorothea goes outside, she assumingly witnesses working scenes like these and, touched by the workers' perseverance and quiet acceptance of their fate, decides to help them and make their concern a public one.

Eliot in *Middlemarch* chooses the character of Mary Garth to present a realist character according to the realist painting tradition, as if to show what it really means to be the object of a realist painting and characterized as such in society. Eliot even trusts Rembrandt (another Dutch realist painter and one of her favorite portrait painters) to capture the true nature of Mary. As we will see, this form does not capture Dorothea and her entire ambition which goes beyond Mary's humble and unambitious conception of life. In Witemeyer's terms, Eliot "loved Rembrandt for the truthfulness of his portraiture"[144] and the choice of Rembrandt as the artist to represent Mary allows, in addition, for a close-up study on painting and representation technique that produces the effect of reality. The painter's realistic treatment of subject can be described as follows:

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[142] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <https://www.pinakothek.de/kunst/jean-francois-millet/bauer-beim-pfropfen-eines-baumes-0>

[143] Witemeyer "Genre painting and common life" par. 4

[144] Witemeyer "Pictorial Taste," par. 8

> He loved to paint everyday people, especially the old, sick and other seemingly picturesque types, and many etchings […] offer eloquent proof of this. Not interested in refinement or even beauty, he reveled in the imperfections and ordinariness of the human form. He prized a documentary truth.[145]

According to this characterization, Rembrandt bridges the gap between art and reality. Truthful representation and realistic treatment of subject in Rembrandt mean that he often rejected a painter's motifs of allegorized paintings in favor of everyday scenes.[146] He cared more about precisely capturing a beam of light on a simple dress than wrapping his subjects in rich and festive clothes and thus creating a prestigious artwork. His painting technique draws attention to the subject and reminds the spectator to focus on the subject's inner life instead of the ornaments around it. In this way, for instance, Mary's steadfastness when challenged with a temptation to make her fiancé and herself rich with Fred's uncle's inheritance is highlighted. A portrayal as that of Mary Garth is not suitable for Dorothea who looks to receive more attention towards her beliefs.

Eliot suggests yet another portrait of a female character with which Dorothea does not even consider to have similarities. It is Rosamond who is of a different kind than Mary Garth and, according to Dorothea's perception, has completely different goals in life. "Rosamond's preoccupation with her 'hair of infantine fairness' [*MM* 112] in front of her toilette mirror [...]"[147] evokes a self-absorption that Dorothea strongly opposes. The contrast between Mary and Rosamond once again brings up Vermeer's "moralischer Diskurs" which brings to light the "Widerstreit von Tugend und Laster" and the "Vanitas-Kritik."[148] The first shows "geheime Sehnsüchte"[149] and highlights vanity while the second exemplifies what it means to "mit gutem Beispiel vorangehen."[150] In *Middlemarch*, the juxtaposition of the two types is seen when Mary and Rosamond meet at the latter's uncle's home and all action seems to be frozen at the moment Rosamond takes off her hat and adjusts her hair –

> hair of infantile fairness, neither flaxen nor yellow. Mary Garth seemed all the plainer standing at an angle between the two nymphs – the one in the glass, and the one out of it, who looked at each other with eyes of heavenly blue, deep enough to hold the most exquisite meanings an ingenious beholder could put into them, and deep enough to hide the meanings of the owner if these should happen to be less exquisite. Only a few children in Middlemarch looked blond by the side of Rosamond, and the slim figure displayed by her riding-habit had delicate undulations. In fact, most men in Middlemarch, except her brothers, held that Miss Vincy was the best girl in the world, and some called her an angel.[151]

Narcissist Rosamond produces the image of the seductress by presenting herself in a mirror and indulging in seeing herself. This is a harsh criticism of vanity, i.e., of the pleasure in the earthly, the

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[145] Genocchio par. 5

[146] Cf. Schneider 21

[147] "George Eliot's Knowledge," par. 10

[148] Schneider 56

[149] Schneider 49

[150] Schneider 61

[151] *MM* 112

material sense. Whereas Rosamond suggests outer and superficial values, plain Mary suggests inner ones. The contrast between the two women brings forth a visualization of an always existing conflict between being moral (Mary) and indulging in early pleasures (Rosamond). Although Dorothea and Mary share their Puritan ways of thinking, Dorothea cannot be a Mary for a lack of ambition in the latter. For not being a Mary – and according to traditional belief, if not a Mary, then one is automatically a superficial Rosamond – Dorothea is constantly hunted by a fear of being immoral in all her efforts to be a woman of this world that has in her all the morals that she aspires to. In this sense, realist art does not provide Dorothea with a language to express herself.

By means of a negotiation between allegorical religious vs. realist paintings, Dorothea does not produce a form with which to express her ambition and ideals – her inner life. Dorothea lacks experience with the two art forms and with artistic language in general. She does not know of the danger of illusion of any representation, not only of the Renaissance paintings she rejects. Furthermore, realist art presents the danger of being too shallow because if not understood properly, it is also easily idealized. Dorothea is inexperienced and too shy in communicating with the voice of realist art so that she cannot express all she has inside, nor educate herself or the receivers of such an art form on how to render it its full power. Besides, Dorothea hesitates to completely turn away and emancipate herself from religious symbolism, which realism requires, for fear of being seen as and even becoming immoral by so doing. As a result, Dorothea cannot express her ambition and her meaning well with realist art.

The question of the requirement of experience for an artwork to be successful and meaningful introduces yet another 19th-century art tendency in this analysis: Pre-Raphaelism. George Eliot felt an affinity for Pre-Raphaelite doctrine[152] and shared this liking with John Ruskin, who also admired these artists' verisimilitude and their expression of inner life in art; the Pre-Raphaelites admired his idea of moral education through art.[153] The Pre-Raphaelites continued the realist tradition and also offered a response to the insufficient expressiveness of traditional art. They did not suggest, however, a complete break with tradition, but a harmonizing of earlier tendencies with present-day approaches, of symbolism with realism – an approach that Dorothea might be more comfortable with. Let us have a look at what Pre-Raphaelite artistic language consists of and how it plays into the analysis conducted here.

As a reaction to what the Pre-Raphaelites considered "defective art"[154] – and by that they meant archaic traditional art – they named their highest goal the enhancement of mere forms with life, essence, and spirituality. It was a "Pre-Raphaelite desire to penetrate the surface of human appearance and reveal heart and humanity."[155] In order to achieve this, Pre-Raphaelites did two things: first of all, they changed the settings of the paintings from religious, mythological, and historical to realist present-day ones and secondly, they tried "to find a symbolical language to replace that of

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[152] Cf. Andres 97-98, cf. Witemeyer in all his studies on Eliot quoted in this thesis

[153] Cf. Werner 25

[154] *MM* 204

[155] *MM* 204

the Middle Ages and Renaissance [and] a symbolism that could speak to the nineteenth century."[156] They were against the "grand conception of supreme events as mysteries."[157] In that they resembled realist concerns.

While a moral message and a present-day context were also of great concern to these artists, their handling of Catholic symbols and conventions in art differs from that of the realists. The Pre-Raphaelites did not intend to renounce all earlier painting traditions, but sought a harmony between earlier practices and the present day. They drew from religious, historic, and mythological imagery and wanted to establish a clear relation with the present-day context:

> Die 1848 in London gegründete Künstlergemeinschaft der Präraffaeliten verfolgte die Erneuerung der Künste gegenüber der offiziellen Viktorianischen Kunst. Die ideologische Ausrichtung basierte auf Inhalten der englischen Literatur und der Historie des Landes sowie auf religiösen Themen mit einem bisher unbekannten Alltagsbezug.[158]

The Pre-Raphaelites were fascinated with early Renaissance art (i.e., the period preceding Raphael) and the attempt to introduce reality into religious paintings, which was typical of early Renaissance painters.[159] They admired the deep, powerful, and vibrant colors of the early Renaissance and considered art after Raphael too mechanical, too concerned with form, and not enough with content. In their view, the compositions after Raphael reflected order from outside and lacked intrinsic values, in other words, heart and soul.

They tried to capture in their paintings the inner motivation to fulfill one's task in life as well as the representation of the obligation to fulfill the duty that comes from outside. The Pre-Raphaelite realists also paid attention to detail, and, additionally, treated nature in an inventive way, i.e., they tried to capture what nature induces in the onlooker. However, in their thinking, art was not finite, but had to create something. It was their intention to show spectators what they know and, at the same time, enable them to experience the existence of something beyond the visible. In this manner, they let the spectators experience what the Renaissance spectators must have experienced in front of the truthful, inspirational, and spontaneous artworks of their times.[160] The Pre-Raphaelites filled their realist paintings with as much meaning as possible and in this way linked them to the symbolism of classical and religious paintings. Thus, they did not eliminate religious symbols, but included them and brought them into a harmonious link with the subjects of their time. The Pre-Raphaelites

> […] attempted to create an art that could marry realism and elaborate iconography, fact and feeling, matter and spirit.[161]
>
> [They] believed that without faith, art becomes materialistic, empty, literal, and dead, because such unspiritualized art can only present facts for their

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[156] Landow "Hunt's Two Battles" par. 5

[157] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 7

[158] Introduction to "Schlafende Schönheiten," Unteres Belvedere Wien

[159] Cf. Audio Guide to *Hochaltar* by Ghirlandaio, Alte Pinakothek

[160] Cf. Werner 15–16

[161] Landow "To Elevate Materialism" par. 1

> own sake. / Thus [they were] fighting two different, though related battles: on the one front [they] fought to popularize a realistic style of painting that could more effectively render both secular and scriptural subjects; on the other, [they] struggled to find the means of keeping that carefully represented accumulation of facts from becoming a mere scientific record. / One means of preventing [their] art from presenting nature claylike and finite was to depict emotionally powerful scenes from literature and from sacred or secular history. From [their] earliest paintings [they] sought to capture the drama intrinsic to climatic moments – whether conceived as theatrical scenes of encounter and recognition or those in which true spiritual illumination occurs.[162]

The Pre-Raphaelites sought the inner life of objects and tried to bring all aspects of an object into the painting.[163]

Pre-Raphaelites were against the mere copying of artistic traditions and conventions and promoted a new combination and thus harmonization. Mere copying refers to the use of Catholic symbols and also the realist techniques of an earlier era. There is the danger in everything becoming a tradition and thus an empty form. Everything can "result in an insistent, iconic quality of subject."[164] As Stoichita points out: "Idolatrie ist ein Problem der Rezeption, nicht der Schöpfung. Der Künstler macht das Bild, der Betrachter macht daraus ein Idol."[165] Not just the artist, but also the spectator, needs to be able to see inner life and spirituality in the painting (the matter), with which she is confronted. In Pre-Raphaelite art, the discussion of the moral aspirations of art extended from the painting itself onto the spectator. To become a spectator-painter[166] who can create an artwork according to Pre-Raphaelite doctrine requires the contribution of one's own experience, one's own inner life. In this analysis of Dorothea, creating her own Pre-Raphaelite painting becomes synonymous with gaze refinement and consciousness building.

The notion of learning has been transformed into the idea of developing the capability of harmonizing the benefits, potential, and limitations of allegorical art as well as that of realist art and finding an individual expression of one's personality in this representation. This can only be achieved by experience. Maturity and clear-sightedness are brought into balance in *Middlemarch*. Maturity is attained through creating experiences and learning from them; learning is equated with sharpening one's gaze and becoming more and more conscious of oneself and one's surroundings. McKelvy notes that "[Eliot's] fiction features […] problems of knowing"[167] and understanding what is going on inside and around a subject. Learning happens *through seeing* and being able to make more and

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[162] Landow "Hunt's Two Battles" par. 2–4

[163] Cf. Introduction to "Schlafende Schönheiten," Unteres Belvedere

[164] Johnson 98

[165] Stoichita 109

[166] Cf. Stoichita 57 for the concept of the "gemischte Figur des Betrachter-Malers." Stoichita calls a spectator-painter all spectators who paint the scene due to their selective vision. In this thesis, a spectator-painter is considered a spectator who is conscious of her selective gaze and respective influence on the seen.

[167] McKelvy 294

more sense of the seen. Dorothea is willing to learn, but she first needs to understand what she needs to learn. It is not learning in the sense of studying books; it is learning from experiences. She needs to see that her images in the form of her understanding of her role create reactions and how to accommodate them. A learning process will lead Dorothea to see "the idealistic in the real."[168] In the novel, Dorothea's heightened understanding of paintings acts as a metaphor for her gaze refinement and development process.

Dorothea undergoes a developmental process that she sets in motion through her desire to learn, her deficient gaze, and an inability to read paintings. That she does not start from nothing is clear from her already existing sensation that present-day representations evoke greater spectator response and that such response is the key to access to development. The closer she delves into observing and reacting to the seen, the more she learns. Learning means refining her gaze, and gaze refinement can be measured by means of the degree of her ability to understand artworks. Two snapshots from Dorothea's life when she is the spectator in front of a scene in a frame prove that there is development in her gaze over the course of the novel: when she is standing in front of a classical, Renaissance painting at her uncle's house and when she is standing in front of the nature scene that presents itself to her through the frame of her boudoir window at her husband's house. What happens between the two snapshots is Dorothea's development process. I will argue that when she is unwilling and unable to read paintings she is at the beginning of her learning process; when she is able to see the painting from her boudoir window, she has matured and learned.

I will also argue that part of her learning process is that she will have to create an affinity with what she sees. It has to concern her. Both realist and Pre-Raphaelite painting approaches raised awareness of ways in which to achieve higher spectator response. The topics of creating nearness, immediacy, disillusion, and response permeate nineteenth-century art discourse and are raised in this analysis precisely to describe Dorothea's development process. It will take her idealizations/illusions and startling experiences until she reaches her final view from her boudoir window, a view that has all the qualities of a Pre-Raphaelite painting – a realist painting that fully expresses to her her ambition, her ideals, and her experience. This last scene will be treated as the expression of her capability of expression, the reflection of her inner life and potential, and thus her *Selbstbild*.

2.2 Modelling the Stages of the Gaze Refinement and Consciousness Building Process

In the previous sub-section, Dorothea's ambition as well as her lack of knowledge of the way others perceive her has been developed by means of an art discourse that includes juxtapositions of traditional art and realist as well as Pre-Raphaelite art. I have also introduced these 19th-century art tendencies with which to discuss the requirements of a truthful representation from a 19th-century perspective. By doing so, I have also prepared the theoretical elements for my next step: the modeling of Dorothea's gaze refinement and image creation and negotiation process, which is Dorothea's self-

[168] *MM* 215

consciousness building process. Whereas the art discourse in the previous sub-section was to illustrate Dorothea's thoughts, this process is to manifest the interface between self- and other-image.

The model is named *Awakening Conscience Model*, owing its name to what it models, namely Dorothea's awakening conscience, and to Holman Hunt's painting by the same name, the evoked version of which marks a turning point in Dorothea's development process. The bases of the model are evoked paintings in the novel, both with or without underlying real paintings. *The Awakening Conscience* by Hunt is one essential underlying real painting in this analysis; the other one of great importance is *Mariana* by John Everett Millais.[169] Stage 1 of the model will be visualized by means of *Mariana*; Stage 2 by means of *The Awakening Conscience*. Precise analyses of these two underlying real paintings produce *pictorial indicators* that will substantially add to the analysis and illustration of Dorothea's process. Before going any further into details of the model, let me say a few words about the mechanics and characteristics of the model.

The *Awakening Conscience Model* describes a process towards sustainable emancipation for Dorothea. An emancipation of illusions leads to freedom for her actions. Illustrating the process in an abstracted manner allows for a focus on what Dorothea precisely does with her experiences with visuality; i.e., her reactions are distilled and put under a magnifying glass. By doing so, the topic of agency is brought into the center of attention and the topic of taking action makes the link between seeing clearly and emancipation possible. Emancipation is achieved with the development of strong images and a strong gaze of one's own.

A learning and development process, in the tradition of Hegelian cycles, has three stages: an idealization stage, a shock moment and its processing, and a realist/mature stage. Accordingly, the *Awakening Conscience Model* also has three stages (cf. Figure 6). In addition, the model has two impulses. Dorothea's story determines the order of the model stages and allows for a comparison of Stage 1 and Stage 3 in the sense of a before-and-after juxtaposition.

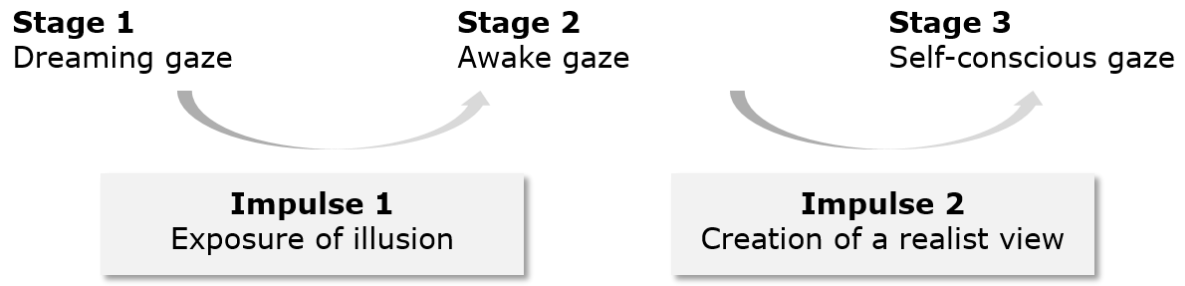

Figure 6 The stages of the *Awakening Conscience Model* (own illustration)

The story can be divided into two parts: idealization/illusion and realism/disillusion. Impulses 1 and 2 allow the process that leads from one to the other to be analyzed (cf. Figure 7). During Impulse 1 and Impulse 2, Dorothea processes what she experiences in the stages. The first part of the novel in this dualism describes the exposure of her failure in marriage to society and eventually to herself, so that

[169] Cf. Leng 2007, 2010, Witemeyer "George Eliot's Knowledge of the Visual Arts," and Andres for their analyses of Pre-Raphaelite paintings in Eliot

she must admit it to both herself and society. Her first decision was based on "youthful illusion and idealism."[170] The second part of the novel is concerned with her mature choice to marry Will Ladislaw. This second decision is more mature than the first since by now she knows herself and her ambitions better, she knows what disappointment from the realization of differing views feels like, and she makes a decision with this awareness and clear-sightedness in mind. The plot centers on Dorothea's choices of a husband. However, the novel is not about her role as a wife *per se*: it is about her role as a modern woman in a society that is not ready to create a space for the modern woman.

Figure 7 *Middlemarch* divided into two parts: Dorothea's idealization vs. her realism phase

The stages are the painting level of the model where Dorothea's sight lines are analyzed, i.e., what Dorothea sees when the paintings are evoked in the novel. The impulses are at the psychological level, i.e., how paintings, images, and experiences with visuality are processed and lead to the relationship between spectator and painting and her capability of truthful representation, which is equaled to her ability to see clearly.

Real paintings are the basis for the first two stages. Two Pre-Raphaelite paintings (*Mariana* by J. F. Millais and *The Awakening Conscience* by Holman Hunt (cf. the illustrations of Stages 1 and 2 of Figure 8) illustrate the way Dorothea refines her gaze and observation skills, i.e., how she manages her step from idealized to more realistic representation; they are the underlying real paintings to imaginary and hypothetical paintings. Andrew Leng's and Hugh Witemeyer's analyses of *Middlemarch* in terms of the visual arts serve for the verification of *Mariana* and *The Awakening Conscience* as underlying real paintings of many scenes in the novel.[171] In fact,

> [a] knowledge of the visual arts has long been considered essential to a full understanding of *Middlemarch*, and […] this understanding is considerably deepened when we take into account the major role played in the novel by George Eliot's treatment of Pre-Raphaelitism, and in particular her response to one Pre-Raphaelite painting: William Holman Hunt's *Awakening Conscience* (1853-4).[172]
>
> Commentators have [also] been struck by the similarities between scenes in *Middlemarch* and […] Dorothea's boudoir-window view […] which reminds

[170] Ashton vii

[171] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" and Witemeyer "George Eliot's Knowledge of the Visual Arts"

[172] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 1

> Witemeyer (153–5) of Millais's *Mariana* (1850–51). […] Dorothea appears appropriately […] as a withdrawn Pre-Raphaelite figure […].[173]

Along with Leng's and Witemeyer's acknowledgement of the two underlying real paintings of *Mariana* by Millais and *The Awakening Conscience* by Hunt, Sophia Andres likewise names them as sources of *Middlemarch* and illustrations for character portrayal.[174] The two underlying real paintings with the respective evoked paintings in the novel, as well as the other above mentioned evoked paintings, are vital to this analysis and will be further elaborated in this section. The two paintings determine at what stage of the development process Dorothea is. In the *Awakening Conscience Model*, the paintings appear in the same order as the scenes that evoke the two paintings appear in the novel. Hunt's painting gives the model its name, and the name captures the model's main concern of *how* to build consciousness, which is a necessary part of a development process.

In the first part of the novel, Dorothea repeatedly adopts the same pose in her boudoir as Mariana in the painting. My claim is that in this first part of the novel she has the same gaze, which stands for attitude and behavior, as Mariana.[175] A reading of the painting leads to an analysis of Dorothea's seeing capabilities and maturity level. With the power of image, the painting describes Dorothea's character in an abstractable and easily comprehensible way.

Stage 1
Dreaming gaze

Stage 2
Awake gaze

Impulse 1
Exposure of illusion

Impulse 2
Creation of a realist view

Figure 8 From idealized to realist illustrated by means of *Mariana* and *The Awakening Conscience*[176]

[173] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 10

[174] Cf. Andres 97

[175] Cf. "realistic style typified by Millais" (Torgovnick 95)

[176] *Mariana* retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-mariana-t07553> and *The Awakening Conscience* retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hunt-the-awakening-conscience-t02075>

In Chapter 77, Dorothea witnesses a scene that evokes Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*. This scene transports her from her idealization phase into her realist phase and thereby marks a crucial moment in Dorothea's life. It is known that George Eliot was interested in this painting:

> […] Eliot [negated] the "pietistic" medievalism of *The Light of the World* [and] she was attracted to the modern-life realism of its material counterpart, and companion at the Royal Academy in 1854, *The Awakening Conscience*. For the religious implications of this painting are sufficiently secularised and humanised to have been acceptable to Eliot's Positivist beliefs.[177]

For the discussion of Dorothea's process, the painting is studied in the sense of what it does to the onlooker of the painting, i.e., in what way it influences her gaze. The evoked painting of *The Awakening Conscience* means a shock moment for the heroine which tremendously accelerates her process of awakening her consciousness. When she is shocked into consciousness, it is her awakening conscience moment, marked with by the painting with the same name.

By offering elaborate readings of these two essentially relevant real paintings to the analysis of a moral ambition, an illusionary state, and a beginning of consciousness awakening, this analysis intentionally develops additional *pictorial indicators* to those which are *pictorial indicators* due to formal painting elements. By these readings, the reader is offered all the studied and deduced elements of the selected real painting – thematic or structural – and her attention can be drawn to moments in the heroines' process that need dealing with and where a negotiation with images is necessary both for the heroine's development and the reader's sympathy and participation.

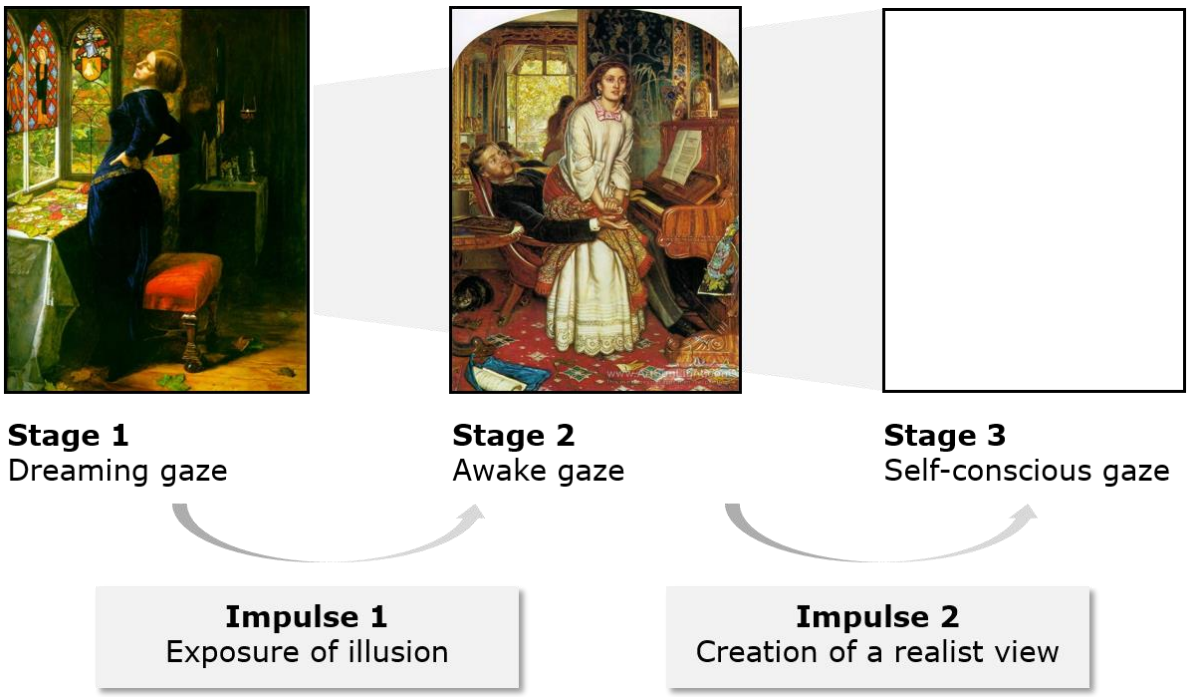

Figure 9 ***The Awakening Conscience Model***

[177] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 20

The third stage is a white canvas onto which the spectator-painter draws her own painting. No predetermined example of a painting serves for the third stage, since this stage is the product of the first two stages and the impulses that take the spectator from stage to stage. It is the display of her own experience and representational power. This must be a hypothetical painting with no underlying real painting – it must be a painting that is only produced with text – the narrator's medium that is lent to Dorothea at the moment of creation.

The discussion of each stage follows the same structure: First, the passage of the novel that deals with the respective stage and the moments when the painting is evoked are determined. Second, a reading of the painting is offered, including points of analysis that serve for the discussion of Dorothea's view of the painting. Paintings are treated as theoretic models for studying the development process. Third, Dorothea's views are analyzed. Fourth, the appearances of Dorothea as the subject of paintings when she is in the respective stage are examined (as imaginary or hypothetical paintings). Lastly, general discussion points for each stage are derived that can be transported onto any spectator and used for the discussion of any spectator's development of their gazes.

The impulses are considered impulses from within. Inevitably, they are analyzed from Dorothea's perspective. They offer the reader a glimpse of Dorothea's inner view and her motivation for her actions. It takes the willingness of each individual who goes through the *Awakening Conscience Process* to learn and develop. A learning process facilitates experience; what counts is what a spectator manages to do with this gained experience.

The structure of the model can be laid over the entire novel of *Middlemarch*. Stage 1 lasts up to the second stage, the big appearance of *The Awakening Conscience*; Stage 2 until the scene that is marked as Dorothea's own creation, her own painting seen by her though the window frame of her boudoir. The structure of the model is a reflection of a Hegelian process. It a visualization of how the unconscious is made conscious and applicable – how realization and materialization takes place.

2.2.1 Stage 1 – A Dreaming Gaze Ignores the Multi-Layeredness of the Seen

The first stage lasts from the very beginning of the novel until Chapter 76 and is described by means of Millais's *Mariana* (cf. Figure 10).

Figure 10 *Mariana* by John Everett Millais[178]

[178] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-mariana-t07553>

The painting features a woman – withdrawn and passive, alone in a room, a closed space, secluded from the world. She appears in a pensive mood. She has stopped working on her embroidery to stretch her back; she seems tired of her work and situation. The scene conveys a sense of loneliness and melancholy. The autumn leaves outside, on the embroidery and (for reasons that are unclear) on the floor, support the feeling of oppressiveness in the scene. The window bars raise the question of whether this room is a prison for the young woman or rather protection from the outside world, leaving her at a seemingly safe distance from outside influences or keeping her away from the world in which she would like to participate.

She has stopped her activity and assumed a waiting pose. Her state of waiting and the sadness of the scene can be explained by the painting's two literary sources: Tennyson's poem of 1830 by the same name and the two characters of Mariana and Angelo from Shakespeare's play *Measure for Measure*.[179] In both stories, Mariana waits for her lover who has abandoned her. She longs for his return, fearing that he will not come back. Mariana is thereby forced into a state of waiting. She also adopts a receptive pose and is ready for her lover's return any minute. It seems that she has been waiting for a long time.

Mariana evokes the Christian motif of the Annunciation, which Millais and others of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood repeatedly represented in their artworks. Mariana's annunciation is a negotiation between earthly and spiritual matters. On the one hand, this motif is evoked by the representation on the stained-glass window and, on the other, by Mariana and her room. Further, a spiritual annunciation is evoked by the introduction of a religious painting into this painting. However, annunciation is called to mind by putting a woman in a position that resembles the Virgin Mary's when receiving the heavenly annunciation. Mariana adopts a solemn pose and she seems to be waiting for something. She appears in front of a table that, with its unfinished altar cloth, resembles an altar. She is standing in front of a stained-glass window representing the face and the shape of either church windows or a religious triptych painting (which is typically positioned behind the altar in Catholic churches). Veit Stoss's *St. Mary's Altar* (cf. Figure 11) is an example of such an altarpiece. On the glass, the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary are represented in an annunciation scene. A closer look at the woman's room reveals, at the back of the room in the darker part of the painting where the source of light is not the incoming sunlight but a candle, an actual altar with a little three-folded painting. It is a household altar for domestic devotions. In the back of Mariana's room, there is actually a small version of a painting that is only evoked in the appearance of Mariana's window. It becomes clear that her table before the three-folded window is a repetition of her household altar before the triptych in the back. A curtain borders the altar scene and, analogously, a tapestry with a similar pattern borders the scene containing Mariana's table and window. If she had been standing in front of the smaller altar in the back, her pose would have been clearly devotional to God. But in front of the window, the object of her devotion is not obvious. Like Mary, she waits for the advent of someone, but unlike Mary it is the advent of a human being, a fact that can be deduced from the painting's two literary sources.

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[179] Cf. Meaghan par. 1

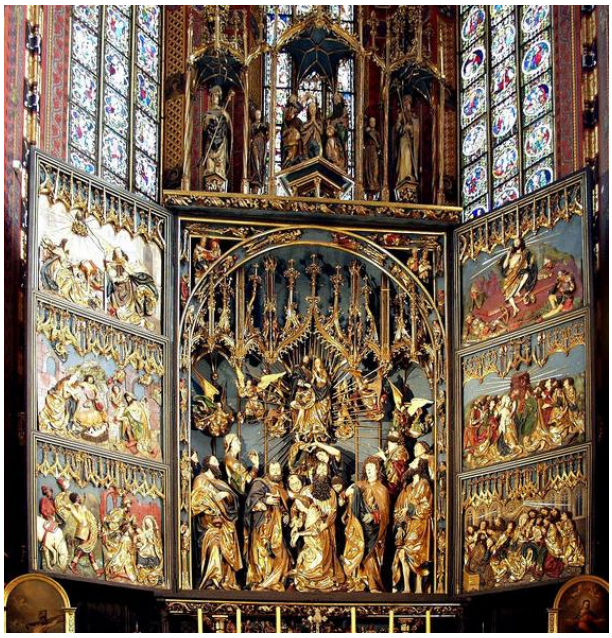

Figure 11 *St. Mary's Altar* by Veit Stoss[180]

Mariana deals with her longing for earthly love (in the shape of a remembered image of her lover, Angelo) and for spiritual love (in the shape of a painted image of the angel Gabriel). "Millais's Annunciation scene makes use of a simple Shakespearean pun on the words angel and Mary and their secular counterparts Angelo and Mariana."[181] The archangel looks at Mariana, not Mary, the virgin who is also painted on the window. The archangel thus adopts Angelo's, the missing lover's, position and approaches Mariana, the representation of passion, not the virgin, the representation of purity. The angel figure becomes an amoral figure and the scene a secular annunciation.

This mingling of spiritual and secular motifs raises the question of morality. Does Mariana long for earthly pleasures? Is she mourning in any way? Does she resent anything? Or has she renounced earthly pleasures and is she waiting for the heavenly fulfillment that is confirmed to her by the motto "in coelo quies" (in heaven there is rest) represented on the window to her right. This motto appears as an inscription on a banner. The shield that also appears on the wing to the right shows a snowdrop. The snowdrop is a further symbol of purity in the painting. It is "a flower associated in the Christian tradition with Candelmas, the feast of the Virgin's purification."[182] As discussed above, she desperately waits for a message from her lover. The heraldic device with the purifying symbol of the snowdrop also expresses her waiting for a different kind of fulfillment from that on earth. The dead leaves on the table and on the floor evoke the concept of *vanitas*. The moment she stops her work and stands up she knows that things do not last forever. She is conscious of the ephemeral and thus able to reflect on the worth of earthly and material things. "Millais's *Mariana* is between dry and verdant plants […] suggesting […] possible redemption from transgression and ultimate reunion in

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[180] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.sacredarchitecture.org/articles/retro_tablum_the_origins_and_role_of_the_altarpiece_in_the_liturgy>

[181] Leng "Millais's 'Mariana'" par. 19

[182] Leng "Millais's 'Mariana'" par. 24

heaven."[183] She is torn between despair and hope and between the attractions of indulging in earthly amusements or completely denying them. She feels oppression because of her fear of her lover's death and because of her inability to act, that is, her inability to act in the matter she is most interested in. She chooses to stop her embroidery and simply to wait. The topic of *vanitas*, however, is not only explored in the sense of recollecting what the true values are before death (cf. *danse macabre*), but also in the sense of harsh criticism regarding the showing of too much attention to earthly matters and thereby falling into lethargy upon disappointed hopes – a negotiation of matter and essence that is also addressed in Vermeerian scenes and the Dutch master's *vanitas* discourse.

The conflict between matter and essence continues in the two representations in the window frame that Mariana can see from her position: the Renaissance religious painting on the glass and the nature scene which can be seen through the transparent parts of the window and understood as a realist painting. The two painting styles are brought together by the spectator and her possible lines of vision. Metaphorically speaking, Mariana holds a Pre-Raphaelite discourse that deals with the question of how to fill religious symbols with meaning and inner life from the present-day context – or vice versa. She could look at the two representations in the window frame as layers of reality that she could lay one over another. Religious symbols – which stand for her ideals – and her context – what concerns her and is enforceable in her surroundings – could be brought into a harmonious bond. She would see reality as a multi-layer reality and understand the complexity of the visual information of a painting and anything that presents itself to her eyes.

However, Mariana refuses to see the choice of representation possibilities and the opportunity of a Pre-Raphaelite composition. She takes on the role of the *inactive female artist*. The *inactive female artist* is a woman who becomes completely inactive on first sensing oppositions to her initial ideas and plans. The artwork Mariana was working on would have allowed her to work spontaneously and directly from nature, weaving into her embroidery the ideals, morals, experiences, and religious aspirations that are very present in her life and sight, represented by the religious painting in front of her. Her embroidery is a "direct realization of nature"[184], but she has stopped that "humble and faithful study of nature"[185] that Ruskin expected of any true artist. She could have been an artist who treated nature in an inventive way, bringing her own experience which would have rounded off the scene as a Pre-Raphaelite creation. *Mariana* becomes a painting that represents missed opportunities, and one in which Mariana is responsible for missing them.

Mariana's inner view keeps her from seeing anything outside of her. She does not look out the window and extend her discourse from her room in the way that, for instance, Dutch realists would have planned for with any window they positioned inside the rooms of their interior scenes.[186] She disconnects from the two paintings and her room, half closes her eyes, and adopts an inward view. The table and the tablecloth which could stand for Mariana's creative power, become symbols of a

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[183] Werner 218

[184] Leng "Millais's 'Mariana'" par. 42

[185] McKelvy 299

[186] Cf. Stoichita 50

barrier between paintings and her inner image. John Locke, whose philosophy Eliot was familiar with and whose name is referred to directly in *Middlemarch* when Dorothea suggests a Locke portrait for the representation of Casaubon before their marriage,[187] used the word "ideas"' to describe perceptual as well as memory material and individual and generic phenomena.[188] Mariana sees many things inside of her. It is not clear what she looks at or sees. It might be assumed that she sees suffering, being torn between despair and hope and between attractions of indulging in earthly fulfillment or completely denying them.

Mariana is "filled with images of things as they [have] been and [are] going to be."[189] But she does not manage to bring those onto a screen and create a painting out of her internal visual information. The notion of placing an emotion into a frame and studying it as a painting introduces a third type of painting, a less tangible one, in Mariana's field of vision: it is the one that is on her mind, i.e., her mental painting. Her inward vision keeps her from forming a truthful image of her reality according to Pre-Raphaelite principles. The concept of the *unexternalized inner image* implies that as long as the inner view is not framed, made visible, externalized, made conscious, and understood, its influence on the two other paintings cannot be controlled, and neither the information gained from the inner vision, nor that of the religious or the realist painting, can be used. The fact that presented information cannot be used when covered by a layer of the *unexternalized inner image* can be seen in Mariana's incapability of seeing a religious scene thereby only experiencing a secular annunciation; it also presents itself in her nature painting that, although it could show bright daylight, to her only manifest itself in dying leaves and sadness. Moreover, her inner views cause her to stop working and are in no way creative nor productive. The quality of the inner views determine the way in which an observer sees all the scenes in her field of vision. However, she does not recognize this influence of the inner views. A development necessity can be illustrated as a necessary development of the capability of creating a harmonized view out of her inner view and her views of the religious painting as well as the nature scene. Mariana has *three layers* in her field of vision from which she could acquire knowledge to express herself. The idea is then that the three paintings work like three layers that can be laid one over another and be brought into a harmonious, multi-layered, as complete as possible, painting. Pre-Raphaelites aspire to a perfect harmony of all three layers. This is a state that can never be completely reached, but needs to be striven for. It is the attempt to exploit the full potential of any situation. As long as a spectator strives for this state, she develops.

Mariana's image, just like any image, is a decision – a more or less conscious one. She chooses to focus on her sorrows rather than looking for more visual information in her surroundings. Having a fantasy image leads to the illusion of not having to form an opinion about one's surroundings or participate in making sense of the world. It is an illusion of being able to be apart in a "luxurious shelter."[190] In this way, a spectator does not realize that she is a part; that she is inside the frame of

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[187] *MM* 16

[188] Arnheim about Locke's understanding of mental images in *Visual Thinking* 98

[189] *MM* 774

[190] *MM* 788

society. It is an illusion that the spectator has nothing to do with the situation around her, that she is in seclusion, behind bars, and protected. How a spectator experiences a situation – and what it means to her – is subjective. By contributing her experience to common knowledge, she helps complete the meaning of a situation. The inactivity of not studying nature and treating one's situation in an inventive way, i.e., trying to make sense of it, is considered immoral.[191] All there is to reality can never be seen: what is seen is always representation. However, more can be seen or made visible if a spectator tries to represent inner life. If the number of spectators who bring inner life into a frame increases, the general knowledge of reality is enlarged. My reading of Mariana can be considered a visualization of Dorothea's orientation towards art as described in the previous sub-section. The following principle will be applied to Dorothea's development process: The degree to which Dorothea realizes Pre-Raphaelite painting theory determines at what stage of her development process she is in. This is a painting approach to Dorothea.

2.2.1.1 Dorothea's *Three Layers*

I will associate the Mariana painting with Dorothea by identifying *pictorial indicators* from the reading of the painting and develop the theories of Mariana's *three layers* and the influence of an *unexternalized inner image* for the heroine of the novel. This provides two different perspectives of the heroine that are both to be examined: First, of her as Mariana with Mariana's *three layers* which she could all of them see and bring into harmony, but does not yet. Second, Dorothea as the character of Mariana – henceforth referred to as a *Mariana object* – from which, when she figuratively adopts the Mariana pose and focuses on her inner image which thereupon results in a fragmented gaze, it becomes clear what she looks like to others. I will start with Dorothea's own views, claiming that these are what determine the way she appears to other characters.

When Dorothea sees her future boudoir for the first time, before her wedding, she should have been warned that it would become for her a prison in the form of *Mariana's room* instead of a home that will grant her and her ideas room to develop:

> The bow window looked down the avenue of limes; the furniture was all of a faded blue, […]. A piece of tapestry over a door also showed a blue-green world with a pale stag in it. […] It was a room where one might fancy the ghost of a tight-laced lady revisiting the scene of her embroidery.[192]

This is a description of the room before Dorothea assumes the Mariana pose for the first time as a married woman. This room is, in fact, a copy of her childhood boudoir that also has traces of Mariana's room. There, Dorothea repeatedly indulged in a "private experience [...] and the care of her soul over her embroidery [...]."[193] The reflection of the room could have helped Dorothea predict sorrows. But she only expects relief from her dissatisfaction as a girl and feels attracted to what the room stands for, namely the fancies of the classical world and endless opportunities for learning. However, the

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[191] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 145

[192] *MM* 75

[193] *MM* 28

room will be *Mariana's room* for her, where she will spend hours with the "care of her [sad] soul over her embroidery."[194] It is a room that looks as if other women have already suffered here: straight-laced ladies who followed customs and norms – social and religious ones – and who had unfulfilled dreams that now only have the form of "pale stags."[195] Dorothea could also see the religious and mythological symbolism with which society represents women and by which the room and the entire house are informed – for the attractions of which she entered the room in the first place. Dorothea accepts the room her future husband offers her in his Grange due to her misconception of it. She accepts a room that makes her Dorothea of the moated grange.[196] She enters the frame that stands for society and conventions with all her ambition to develop these conventions. Dorothea has to enter the room to experience the feeling associated with the consequences of such a frame and in order to draw her conclusions.

Inside the room, Dorothea could still potentially see Mariana's three paintings and become fully aware of her situation. However, she only sees the influenced versions of the religious paintings (or what takes the role of this painting, namely the miniatures) and the nature scene (the view towards the avenue of limes) that are altered by her *unexternalized inner image*, in the same way as Mariana's were. Dorothea thereby also misses the chance of developing herself during her hours of meditation in the room. In trying to deal with her disappointment in marriage, she often takes refuge in her boudoir, but, of course, at that point in her life, she is not there to closely study all Mariana's layers. She stands in front of her window and also in front of a number of miniatures of Will's grandmother who had fallen out of favor with society because of her extreme independence.

Dorothea's inner view plays a predominant role, since it colors the other two aspects in an incontrollable way. It has not yet become conscious, but is still the 'quaintness' in all she sees. Her inner view is clearly filled with sadness about her unhappy marriage, her frustrated wishes for development, and her longing for Will. It is triggered by the miniatures that link the memories of Dorothea's own frustrations to Will's grandmother's sad story. In fact, the miniature of Will's mysterious grandmother triggers many of her fantasies and the "pallid quaintness" of her boudoir offers an adequate surrounding for endless imaginings.[197] The miniature assumes various aspects in the course of the novel; the avenue of limes also appears in several different lights depending on Dorothea's state of mind. Dorothea creates these different versions of her two paintings by unconsciously adding her emotions, memories, expectations, and feelings to the scene. There is reciprocity: she lays sadness over realist and religious painting and this sadness reinforces her sad state of mind. She does not, however, consciously perceive the different versions or allow herself to see what her inner view (and thus she herself as spectator-painter) does to the representations, since they would only be proof of her unhappiness in marriage and, therefore, of her responsibility. When she focuses on her

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[194] *MM* 28

[195] Cf. Arnheim 101 (stag stands for Traumbild)

[196] Cf. Full name of *Mariana* is *Mariana in the Moated Grange*

[197] *MM* 371

inner view, she is absorbed and loses all the potential meaning and the multi-layeredness of reality of the scene around her. She practices a fragmented gaze.

In Dorothea's case, the realist painting is represented by the series of evoked paintings of the avenue of limes and rows of hedges as borders of her world visible through the window and potentially a representation of peasant paintings, a realist visual language, of which Dorothea was conscious before she stepped into *Mariana's room*, before her marriage, but for which the power of expression has been lost. She could have continued her interest in her present-day context, but not in the Mariana pose in her boudoir. Metaphorically speaking, when seeing the avenue of limes from inside the room, Dorothea takes a look outside the window at her present and future, which is a realist notion of enlarging her existence, but she does not make sense of what she sees and does not link it to herself and her ambitions.

The first time the avenue of limes appears, it is within a positive image drawn by Dorothea of her future home.

> [Mr Casaubon's home] had a small park, with a fine old oak here and there, and an avenue of limes towards the south-west front, with a sunk fence between park and play-ground, so that from the drawing-room windows the glance swept uninterruptedly along a slope of greensward till the limes ended in a level of corn and pastures, which often seemed to melt into a lake under the setting sun.[198]

This image containing the avenue of limes is a hypothetical painting that foreshadows her whole future. The fences are down and give access to a play-ground. There is no limit for Dorothea. This is a view which Dorothea never has from her boudoir, but it would potentially be there. Only a little later, the sight of the avenue of limes already "cast[s] shadows."[199] The next view of the avenue is had by Dorothea while her mind is filled with thoughts of Will's mysterious grandmother, whom she only knows from the miniature in her boudoir. The more Dorothea learns of Will's grandmother, the more she indulges in her sorrows. She has the feeling of experiencing the same fate as the old woman in the miniature. The miniature, which represents the idealistic representation – the layer of the allegorical painting – represents more and more her ideal of suffering. It takes three images of the avenue until it completely yields to the layer of Dorothea's inner view and appears in the following hypothetical painting which is composed when Will makes his farewells for the first time, upon which Dorothea views the avenue "with rosebushes which seemed to have in them the summers of all the years when Will would be away when looking out of the window."[200] This scene now expresses ever-present sadness and, therefore, looking out the window does not bring to mind a promising future, as the first sight of Dorothea's future home had done for her.

The miniatures of Will's grandmother become an icon and an allegorized representation to her – the representation of Mariana's layer of the religious painting. Not that his grandmother was a saintly figure; on the contrary, she was disowned by her family for what her family considered indecent

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[198] *MM* 73

[199] *MM* 76

[200] *MM* 542

behavior. It is not clear what happened to the woman, but allusions to her misfortunes are made to Dorothea. In Will's grandmother the young woman sees a woman who has suffered all women's tragedies – that of not being understood and of not being free. The ideal of martyrdom appeals to the young heroine. In the same way as a Christian icon represents something, in her case virtues, this woman in the miniature stands for something else, namely suffering. She is not primarily an individual, but instead a type, and she is idealized by Dorothea. It is in this sense that the miniature becomes a classic and allegorized painting.

Dorothea's inner view has an uncontrollable effect on her view of the miniatures, since it is not yet conscious. She adopts the morals of the classical painting that she creates herself and becomes sadder and sadder. The moral she sees is that it is women's fate to suffer. Her allying with the grandmother tells the reader of her mental agitation and shows that she is depressed in her marriage to Casaubon and in love with Will. At that point, only the reader sees this, namely by Dorothea's treatment of the miniature. The miniature of Will's grandmother often activates and accompanies her meditative experiences. She is captured by the woman's "deep grey eyes rather near together – and the delicate irregular nose with a sort of ripple in it – and the powdered curls hanging backward."[201] In her view, Will's grandmother is not beautiful but peculiar. It is as if she has fallen in love with this picture and everything related to it at that particular moment. She receives it as a preciosity, rather than a representation of spirituality, i.e., as form rather than substance. Dorothea gets an idea of this woman's personality by the picture that is shown to her. The fact that she differs very much from Casaubon's mother, of whom there is also a picture in Dorothea's boudoir, is reflected in their faces and confirmed by Casaubon's statement that "they were not alike in their lot."[202]

Almost an exact copy of the description of Will's grandmother's eyes, nose, and hair is found in the presentation of Will himself. It is again Dorothea who observes these features, namely "a pair of grey eyes rather near together, a delicate irregular nose with a little ripple in it, and hair falling backward…."[203] Whereas the grandmother's miniature only provoked attraction and interest in Dorothea, Will produces an impression that also scares her: "… there was a more prominent, threatening aspect than belonged to the type of the grandmother's miniature."[204] However, threat and attraction are close together. Dorothea first sees Will's grandmother before she sees Will himself, and she forms an impression of Will based upon the impression she has from looking at the miniature. In fact, she creates her image of Will at the very moment she is presented with the miniature, and until seeing Will in her dream during a vigil towards the end of the novel, she will stick to this initial impression and attribute to Will what the miniature means to her. She identifies completely with that "woman who had known some difficulty about marriage."[205]

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[201] *MM* 76

[202] *MM* 76

[203] *MM* 79

[204] *MM* 79

[205] *MM* 275

Her appearance prompts Dorothea to reflect on who judged the woman's marriage as unfortunate – a fact she has learned from her husband's account of the woman. Was it her surroundings or also the woman herself? Drawing parallels to her own marriage, Dorothea contemplates the experiences she has had in the time between first seeing the miniature and now. The additional knowledge that her husband gave her has an effect on the way Dorothea now sees the woman in the picture:

> [n]ay, the colours deepened, the lips and chin seemed to get larger, the hair and eyes seemed to be sending out light, the face was masculine and beamed on her with that full gaze which tells her on whom it falls that she is too interesting for the slightest movement of her eyelid to pass unnoticed and uninterpreted.[206]

She feels as if the woman has communicated with her – in an uncanny, uncontrollable way – and that she could have a conversation with someone who entirely understands her. This idea makes her face light up for a moment before she immediately suppresses any possible influence of an impure emotion towards her husband. After that second look at the miniature, the picture will always serve as a reminder to her of the happy moments she had in Rome when Will was present. From Will's information about his mysterious relatives, Dorothea gathers "fresh images,"[207] i.e., representations of her inner views. The more information she receives about the unjustly treated family members, the dearer they grow to her. From a mere affection, she develops physical yearning. This manifests itself in her wish to caress the miniature at some point.[208] The realization of her longing to touch it prepares her consciousness for the longing to have a physical, an actual, bond with Will.

First and foremost, however, she expects the longed-for fulfillment of the worthy, earthly occupation of a wife. In order to achieve this goal, she has to repress her feelings for Will and to fit into the frame of Casaubon's idea of a good wife. Her repression gives way to the negative perception of *Mariana's room* that she could have seen from the very beginning. Namely,

> [h]er blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight.[209]

The immense dream of a productive life with Casaubon has turned out to be a product of her fantasy. Learning is not possible; helping in any way is not possible. It becomes clear that Mariana's room is in fact a prison – a moral prison. The fact that Dorothea is not granted any duties in their married life almost destroys her last efforts at survival. The power of youth runs up against a wall. Her ambitions have failed and, from her perspective at this time, there is nothing she can do about it.

At this stage of the process, Dorothea lacks the knowledge of the existence of Mariana's figurative three layers and her option to choose what her image of her surroundings should look like; that is to say, in what way to compose what she can and wants to see with the given material: her

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[206] *MM* 275

[207] *MM* 371

[208] Cf. *MM* 547–8

[209] *MM* 274

religious painting (her ideals), her nature painting (what is real and feasible), her inner image (which externalized becomes experience). Harmonizing the three can be considered a Pre-Raphaelite approach. The Pre-Raphaelite language Dorothea will only have to learn. For the time being, Dorothea ignores the fact that she is lost in her thoughts – her inner image – which cannot be grasped by others, not even by herself, nor used for the creation of how she sees things. Her inner image exerts an incontrollable influence on the other two layers, but does not yield a harmonized picture of her ideals put into practice. She also ignores the fact that she was in the same position, figuratively speaking, when she had in mind her ambition of an intellectual challenge and chose a learned husband. Her absorbed view equals her idealized view which led her into a bond with Casaubon whom she idealized for his studies. Dorothea's musing in her boudoir – in *Mariana's room* – produces neither any experience nor any visible results.

Beside the negotiation Dorothea could have with the possible representations of her situation in the form of the idealized, the realist, or the dream image, a negotiation also takes place between the characters when idealized and allegorized paintings and realist paintings of different characters collide, i.e., when ideas and points of view about the representation of characters are negotiated. In the model, this dialog of representing and being represented is depicted. Analogously, it makes sense to give an overview of the representations of Dorothea when she is in the *Mariana* stage.

2.2.1.2 Dorothea Within the Frame of *Mariana's Room*

When in Stage 1, Dorothea is mainly represented as a classical, highly stylized, or idealized figure – after all, with her idealized views she does not offer any other artistic language. The heroine assumes that her efforts to be a Puritan would be recognized, but all that other characters see in her is a Christian icon. Dorothea has not managed to transform her moral and noble aspiration into her present-day context, neither producing a reliable religious, nor realist, painting. Kimberley VanEsveld Adams analyzes *Middlemarch* in terms of Dorothea as a modern Madonna figure that goes beyond a classical Madonna figure. Interestingly, she finds that Dorothea cannot be represented as the Madonna, due to her creator's secular approach to the representations of her. The representations of Dorothea cannot express her puritanical purity, i.e., real religiousness, since this is not visible to the painters, the creators. Male characters perceive Dorothea as "the most perfect young Madonna" among the art figures in the Vatican.[210] By means of the analysis of the male gaze, VanEsveld Adams draws overall conclusions about the representation of women in modern society. According to VanEsveld Adams, "…the Virgin Mother was a continuing presence in Eliot's work, and her treatment by the novelist reflected the changing context in which she was seen: art, history, and evolutionary theory."[211] Dorothea tries to be a Christian figure: She dresses plainly, renounces her mother's pearls, and practices charity in her parish.

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[210] *MM* 190

[211] VanEsveld Adams 148

However, in Stage 1, she can only be the religious figure that the male spectators make of her. This is very meaningful, since she herself claims that she "can never see the beauty of those pictures"[212] – meaning traditional Catholic paintings. Realist visual language would have been a way to introduce her spirituality – visible, graspable – into the matter and into her surroundings, but she neither understands nor pays attention to this language, as well as the language of Renaissance paintings, enough to actively influence or create a language that suits her. She thus completely depends on the meaning that the spectators see and on the qualities which they want to highlight in her. The male views are curtailing and dismembering views.[213] Dorothea neither understands the conventional religious symbols in the representations shown to her, nor in the representations of herself – a condition under which she suffers and that causes her to blame herself for "her own spiritual poverty."[214] At this moment, Dorothea shows her dependence on the representation of herself. If a trait is missing in a representation of her, she suddenly questions its existence altogether. Likewise, she feels that, "from the oppressive masquerade of ages", "her own life too seemed to become a masque with enigmatical costumes."[215] The different appearance she is forced to wear by representations of her feels like a mask. Masks invoke a feeling of artificiality that is irreconcilable with reality. VanEsveld Adams claims that

> [i]n Eliot's fiction, religious art has signified the empowering possibility; it represents the transcendent, or the ideal, or the nobly dreamed and desired. But by Dorothea's time […], this art has largely become illegible. The images cannot be decoded, as Eliot shows, and the language no longer exists to suggest what else one might know or do or be.[216]

The consequence of this is, as VanEsveld Adams furthermore states, that

> [t]he Madonna becomes almost wholly a limiting figure for women, an image no longer expressive of female self-definition but instead proposed and interpreted by men. Moreover, there is no longer any space, either inside or outside society, where the Madonna can emerge in her full grandeur. She cannot be accommodated by an increasingly secular society from which awareness of spiritual things, and even God, seem to have disappeared. Eliot […] suggest[s] an important connection between the reception of sacred images of women and the status of actual women.[217]

VanEsveld Adams mentions the discrepancy between secularized representation and the spiritual symbols as "a […] bit of antithesis."[218] She brings up the ambiguity of seeming and real religiousness that is a problem in society in general. "In Eliot's fiction, the Madonna can stand for the virgin, the mother or a mere decorative figure."[219] In *Middlemarch*, the Madonna, represented by Dorothea,

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[212] *MM* 79

[213] Cf. VanEsveld Adams 186

[214] *MM* 192

[215] *MM* 193

[216] *MM* 194

[217] *MM* 185

[218] *MM* 189

[219] VanEsveld Adams 164

assumes the function of a decorative figure, since the heroine is reduced to her appearance and, therefore, fails to convey her essence, i.e., she cannot represent her full grandeur. She is reduced to her outward beauty. In the secularized male gaze, VanEsveld Adams sees the limiting power of women in society. Moreover, she sees women's powerlessness reflected in the moment when Dorothea could have a say in a male representation of her when she is actually painted by Adolf Naumann, an artist whom the Casaubons meet in Rome, but feels unable to do so and, consequently, leaves the decision to the male characters. Her incompetence to choose the image in which she should appear to the world becomes highly symbolic of the male characters' influence on her appearance and of her merely decorative function due to their influence. As a matter of fact, not only in Naumann's studio is she treated as a piece of art, but whenever she is looked at by male characters. The heroine lets herself be incarcerated in male gazes just as Mariana, locked away in a moated grange, chooses to be passive.

The series of classical paintings of the heroine starts out with imaginary paintings of her as a saint or classical beauty. In other words, the narrator and Middlemarch society, determining that the evoked paintings are imaginary painting, all portray her as a classical icon. Mariana could be in a religious or a secular annunciation scene and, as a consequence, could represent all that: on the one hand, a pure, reverent woman, withdrawn from life in order to take care of her devotional duties or, on the other hand, an artist, a creative woman who wants to take part in life, but is locked up. In Dorothea, only the first part, the quiet, submissive part is recognizable to society. Accordingly, there is no representation of her inner vision until Will helps it to come to the surface. Middlemarch society sees her in a conventional way. It applies predetermined ideas and concepts (in art and culture) to the representation of the young woman. The portrait series is a progression from imaginary to hypothetical to an actual painting of her. Thus, the frames around her as classical, pre-determined figure become firmer and firmer in this first stage of her development process and their curtailing effect on the complete meaning of the heroine become more and more apparent.

Dorothea's debut, her first appearance, is that of a saint. The scene is not yet visible to Middlemarch society. Although the reader is the only spectator of the scene of her first appearance, the scene demonstrates clearly how the representation of the heroine is accomplished. It also shows how the heroine is always in some form or another looked at and fated to hold the Mariana pose. The early appearance of the scene of the initial painting of Dorothea precisely emphasizes the importance of the notion of representation in the novel. It is, in this sense, a foreshadowing of the many images that will be sketched of Dorothea in the course of the novel. Dorothea is often depicted as a saintly figure. This is also the case in the initial scene.

> Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation

> from the Bible, – or from one of our elder poets, – in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper.[220]

After a very brief moment of looking at her, her aspect prompts an image of the Virgin Mary. From this moment on, she assumes the classical pose of a saint and can never be just Dorothea Brooke. She is a Christian heroine of a classical painting from the very beginning. It is evident that from the first time she is encountered, although only by the reader, she is already characterized in terms of a religious symbol and transformed into an image.

The first time Dorothea is presented, the focus is on her simple clothes and her bare style, which, according to the narrator, emphasize her beauty. Since the reader is able to observe her closely, it is as if she rested in a pose and sat for a painting. A static picture of the protagonist of *Middlemarch* is provided, which allows her whole posture as well as at her profile to be regarded at length and from different angles. The reader, who is provided with a sight that would facilitate the study of a subject with the goal of representing it in a painting, adopts the function of spectator. Indeed, shortly after, as soon as the image of the Virgin Mary is prompted by Dorothea's appearance, she is already represented like an artwork. The evoked image immediately takes hold and transforms into a representation of Dorothea that replaces the first impression of her, that is to say, the one which had not yet been reproduced in terms of religious symbols. Although Dorothea appears for a brief moment in absolute privacy, she is exposed to the exterior world, and her points of view will, consequently, be challenged by the outside world from the very moment she is seen in this initial scene. In fact, this initial scene is already a translation of her real nature, which is made obvious by the frames of the imaginary painting that have been imposed on her. The fact that in her first appearance she is also already converted into a representation of herself announces her fate as that of existing as a model for representations before anything else. The reference to the newspaper made in the above-mentioned imaginary painting shows another aspect of her fate, namely that Dorothea's personal affairs will be made public. The representations of Dorothea continue as allegorical paintings, which shows that her Puritan ambitions – described in the text right after the above depicted evoked painting – are not recognized and that there is no language for this. In her debut scene, her appearance is "decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection."[221] She is not seen as a "young lady of some birth and fortune, who knelt suddenly down on a brick floor by the side of a sick labourer and prayed fervidly,"[222] which would give the character and scene the closeness of actuality and the concreteness of matter.

Dorothea's next portrait is an imaginary painting of her as Santa Barbara. In this second painting, she has already been exposed to views from society which potentially judge her for being too free-spirited and a threat to traditions. Dorothea's first confrontation with judgmental views is when she appears for the first time in public (in the sight of society) as the future wife of Casaubon, entering the scene of their engagement party. The impression Dorothea makes on the guests (representing

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[220] *MM* 7

[221] *MM* 8

[222] *MM* 9

society) at this moment is the subject of a hypothetical painting, a hypothetical classical painting. She appears to society as Santa Barbara. She stands in the center of attention and thus forms "the subject of many observations"[223], as if she were the subject of a painting that is viewed and evaluated by its spectators. By means of observation, the guests form opinions and representations of her. Dorothea is presented and perceived by the spectators as

> an agreeable image of serene dignity when she came into the drawing-room in her silver-grey dress – the simple lines of her dark-brown hair parted over her brow and coiled massively behind, in keeping with the entire absence from her manner and expression of all search after mere effect. Sometimes when Dorothea was in company, there seemed to be as complete an air of repose about her as if she had been a picture of Santa Barbara looking from her tower into the clear air, but these intervals of quietude made the energy of her speech and emotion the more remarked when some outward appeal had touched her.[224]

The first part of the above passage is the description of Dorothea's dress and hairstyle, i.e., this part is the picture she offers simply by stepping into the room. Another part is the picture of Santa Barbara evoked in the spectators by Dorothea entering the room. There are parallels between Dorothea's and Santa Barbara's destinies. Santa Barbara is locked away in order to take control of her thoughts and actions, especially in terms of her religion. Dorothea is concerned with the poor and also criticized for this. In the conservatives' minds, this mingling of classes looks inappropriate and gives certain political parties grounds for criticism or even punishment. Many representations of Santa Barbara show her in a tower. The myth of Santa Barbara tells us that this early saint was locked up in a tower by her father in order to preserve the purity of her beauty, to "keep her from indulging in a habit of constantly helping the poor"[225], as well as to impede her conversion to the new religion, which at that time was Christianity.

Dorothea also looks down from a tower in the hypothetical painting. The tower, in Dorothea's case, represents a prison of tradition and expectations, and, in the same way that Santa Barbara is imprisoned for fear of the consequences of her behavior, Dorothea will be controlled and restricted. However, her energetic manner of acting, which is only an expression of her individualism, fights the intentions to imprison her. Dorothea, as it says in the novel, is like a picture of the saint, which calls to mind an image of Dorothea holding a pose. On some occasions, she keeps as still as the comparison to the Santa Barbara picture implies. The painting tries to keep her completely quiet and passive: "her hair is massively coiled back," there is "complete absence of *her* manner and expression," and she is supposedly only searching "for mere effect" with "[a] complete [...] air of repose." Her vitality then forms a contrast to this quiet picture. The quiet instances prompt the image of her locked up in a tower and are, at the same time, the exemplification of how others would like to see and have her. Dorothea's active intervals disturb the static picture and may convey the essence of Santa Barbara's quiet rebellion, which can also be found in Dorothea. The fact that Dorothea's calm periods suggest

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[223] *MM* 88

[224] *MM* 88

[225] Young par. 1

the imprisonment of a saint expresses Dorothea's protective custody, also by male authority, as in the saint's case. Dorothea's restless component, however, appears very striking to the spectators. Her activity is not considered acceptable.[226] Dorothea's intentions, which are to help the poor and to adopt a public function, necessarily collide with society's preference of seeing her in a passive state.

The picture of Santa Barbara represents another moment after the initial scene in which Dorothea is shown as a saint in a plain dress. The reference to the heroine's clothes has the function of illustrating Dorothea's change from girl to woman. The comparison of Dorothea's initial appearance with her first appearance in public provides the deduction that society's protection is a form of imprisonment. Whereas the first picture displays only her intimacy, the second scene displays it but also already hints at the problems she will face by externalizing her intimacy. The reactions to her introduction to society are almost all negative ones. Every spectator takes the liberty to form his opinion using the vague ground of looking at her. An old lawyer has gathered the only positive impression; this, however, only because he already sympathizes with the "landed gentry,"[227] to which Dorothea belongs. He thus sympathizes with what Dorothea represents. Among all, the local businessman Bulstrode, who will prove most untrustworthy and unethical in the course of the novel, names the behavior of women in society altogether a product of evil. Now that Dorothea is married, adult behavior is expected of her – "adult" meaning behavior that corresponds to society's expectations. For Sir James, Dorothea's first suitor, Dorothea is "the mirror of all women still,"[228] which to him means that he still thinks highly of her, but also conveys the meaning that Dorothea reflects what all woman suffer: namely confrontation with the points of view and criticism of others when presenting themselves publicly. Santa Barbara was forbidden to turn to the new religion. Applying this to Dorothea's situation, the new religion is modernism and one can claim that Middlemarch society tries to impede the young woman's adoption of the modern concept of being independent. In summary, the criticism she had to face in her family and will face in society (including in her future husband) materializes into the picture of Santa Barbara in the spectators' minds. The many points of view that have been expressed since the first appearance of Dorothea have managed to transform the initial imaginary painting of a saint into the painting of a saint who is imprisoned. The various points of view of society are, therefore, sketched as a prison. This representation of her as Santa Barbara juxtaposes Will Ladislaw's representations of Dorothea. He does not sketch Dorothea's "dreadful imprisonment" in society[229], but concentrates on the purity that, to him, she has not lost and that he will try to preserve. He is portrayed as a Pre-Raphaelite artist with influence on both the way she will eventually see herself and also society.

Before Will gets the chance to come up with an alternative to representations of his beloved, he is present when Naumann first creates a hypothetical and then an actual painting of Dorothea. Naumann is an artist of the Nazarene school. Nazarene art had much in common with Pre-Raphaelite

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[226] Cf. *MM* 89

[227] *MM* 89

[228] *MM* 91

[229] *MM* 391

art, especially regarding its artists' efforts to renew the art of their time, but differed from it in a few points, above all in their use of Christian symbolism. Nazarene art in the novel adopts the function of offering an alternative to Pre-Raphaelite art, embodied by Will, and by making the latter express his opinion of art and thereby explain the Pre-Raphaelite approach. Moreover, the Nazarene artist's paintings trigger discussions on art by several characters and thereby uncover their attitudes towards art and towards life. Last, the struggle between Will and Naumann to find an adequate representation of Dorothea reflects the struggle Dorothea has within her. It is a negotiation between representing, on the one hand, realist immediate actuality and, on the other hand, a Christian idealism, to which, as the Will suggests, Pre-Raphaelite art is the most suitable answer.

When the action is set among the highly Catholic artworks of the Vatican, Will introduces the Casaubons to Naumann. Will and Naumann paint and discover Rome's art scene together. Witemeyer's characterization of the Nazarene school of painting provides the model for Naumann's character:

> It has long been recognized that Adolf Naumann, the German painter of the Rome chapters of *Middlemarch*, represents the Nazarene or revivalist tradition, which was the branch of German Romantic art best known in Victorian England […]. Naumann is modeled upon two identifiable Nazarenes: Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869) and Josef von Führich (1800-76).[230]

In 1804, Overbeck studied at the Vienna art academy. At that time, he was already known for his interest in Romanticism and religion.[231] He later went to Rome and it was there that the Nazarene school was founded and from where it spread across Europe. The school aimed for a patriotic art with a religious basis that reconciled Italian art with art of Northern Europe, for instance Raphael with Dürer.[232] Its artists tried to go back to a more moral and religious art than was known at the time across many countries. One could think that their approach to art would be congruent with Ruskin's and the Pre-Raphaelite's. In fact, the Nazarenes are often considered the forerunners of the Pre-Raphaelites.[233] However, several critics have pointed out critical attitudes towards the Nazarene movement. It is also known that George Eliot expressed concerns with Nazarene art. Its representations of saints did not appeal to her. In this respect, VanEsveld Adams claims that "[Eliot] felt their monumental paintings contained too much mind and not enough nature and they tried to renovate archaic forms and beliefs and propose a Christian 'key to all mythologies' as misguided as Casaubon's own."[234] The description of Nazarene art as an attempt to compose a key to all mythologies, which is an allusion to Casaubon's practices in the field of literature, explains the Nazarene artists' way of treating history and inclusion of historical elements in their artworks; that is to

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[230] Witemeyer "History Painting" par. 17

[231] Cf. Introduction to "Schlafende Schönheiten," Unteres Belvedere

[232] Cf. Audio Guide to *Italia and Germania* by Overbeck, Neue Pinakothek

[233] Cf. Introduction to "Schlafende Schönheiten," Unteres Belvedere

[234] VanEsveld Adams 189-90

say, they accepted religious knowledge as a fact and deduced everything from the point of view of church history. Religious symbols, therefore, rather indicate a historical date than a spiritual moment.

Eliot found the symbolism and iconography of the German art movement arbitrary and "insufficiently grounded in an empirically observed and represented order of nature,"[235] or, in other words, the "Nazarene program ran dead against George Eliot's belief in humanistic empiricism and evolutionary development."[236] The Nazarenes wanted to go back to Raphael and paint Madonnas exactly in the Renaissance artist's style. By doing so, they tried to bridge three centuries and the results often appeared somewhat rigid.[237] The characters of Will, Mr. Casaubon, and, later on, Mr. Brooke, all find fault in Naumann's art, and Dorothea certainly struggles with Nazarene representations as well. Will claims, for instance, that his friend's art contains objects that are not sufficiently recognizable and he mocks "the symbolic pretensions of Nazarene allegories of church history" (par. 29) when informing his audience about his plans for a painting of himself:

> I have been making a sketch of Marlowe's Tamburlaine Driving the Conquered Kings in his Chariot. I am not so ecclesiastical as Naumann, and I sometimes twit him with his excess of meaning. But this time I mean to outdo him in breadth of intention. I take Tamburlaine in his chariot for the tremendous course of the world's physical history lashing on the harnessed dynasties. In my opinion that is a good mythical interpretation.' Will here looked at Mr. Casaubon, who received this offhand treatment of symbolism very uneasily, and bowed with a neutral air.[238]

Will makes fun of his friend's and the Nazarene's "Frommtun," which has very little to do with genuine piety or a notable respect to the history and religious painting tradition.[239] Casaubon's objection to Will's art expressed in the above cited passage shows his own concern with religious symbols, his firm belief that his own approach is the only right one, and, in addition, his antipathy towards Will in general. Casaubon believes that one owes it to religious and mythological tradition to continue in the same way as always. He is against individual treatment of subject and against individuality in general. Mr. Brooke admits at some point that in the painting by Naumann which he has been shown, everything is symbolical. However, he considers it difficult to decipher the meanings of the symbols and, therefore, cares more about the appearance of the painting than about its meaning. Mr. Brooke's way of dealing with arbitrary symbols is more comfortable than attempting to interpret them. Mr. Brooke's reaction, therefore, stands for a superficial treatment of art. He simply accepts and admires any way of representation as long as it is important enough to be of common interest. This attitude is typical of Mr. Brooke but can also be found in most of the other characters, although perhaps in a less obvious form.

Naumann's hypothetical painting of Dorothea is that of the classical Greek statue of *Ariadne.* Naumann creates this hypothetical painting of Dorothea when he catches sight of her at the Vatican

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[235] Witemeyer "History Painting" par. 24

[236] Witemeyer "History Painting" par. 31

[237] Cf. Audio Guide to *Die Heilige Familie* by F. W. Shadow, Neue Pinakothek

[238] *MM* 213

[239] Cf. Goethe quoted on Audio Guide to *Goethe* by Joseph Karl Stieler, Neue Pinakothek

as she is standing next to the marble sculpture of Ariadne. Ariadne is a Greek mythological figure and the subject of various artworks of Renaissance artists, such as Tintoretto (*Bacchus and Ariadne*) and Titian (*Ariadne* and *Bacchus and Ariadne*). Dorothea is treated in the same way as the sculptures, namely as a mere figure holding a pose that Naumann does not want to miss:

> [t]hey were just in time to see another figure standing against a pedestal near the reclining marble: a breathing blooming girl, whose form, not shamed by the Ariadne, was clad in Quakerish grey drapery; her long cloak, fastened at the neck, was thrown backward from her arms, and one beautiful ungloved hand pillowed her cheek, pushing somewhat backward the white beaver bonnet which made a sort of halo to her face around the simply braided dark-brown hair. She was not looking at the sculpture, probably not thinking of it: her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor.[240]

Will and Naumann perceive the difference between the viewed objects, i.e., between Dorothea and the sculptures that surround her. Juxtaposing her to the sculptures, they notice that Dorothea is "beauty in its breathing life", whereas the sculptures are "antique beauty, […] arrested in the complete contentment of its sensuous perfection"[241]; however, they immediately reduce Dorothea to an object in their imagined pictures again.

When Dorothea becomes the object of representations in Rome (in hypothetical paintings and actually painted ones), the reader is offered an exemplification of the Nazarene way of creating art and, in the voice of Will Ladislaw, of objections that could be raised against these practices. Naumann's artistic background has already been explained. Will's background also needs to be analyzed. Andrew Leng in his article "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness' and Pre-Raphaelite Aesthetic in *Middlemarch*" is convinced that Will stands for the English Pre-Raphaelite art. Concerning the identification of the model for Will's character, Leng claims:

> Historically speaking, the Pre-Raphaelite painter whom Will most resembles is Ford Madox Brown. Although Brown was never invited to join the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood when it was formed in September 1848, he was a close associate of theirs and their only link with the Nazarenes, having met Overbeck in Rome and been influenced by him in his work of the 1840s. Having met Overbeck herself in 1860, during the 1860s Eliot also met most of the English Pre-Raphaelites. In 1868 she and Lewes were introduced to the Burne-Joneses, and through them the Leweses soon met William Morris and D.G. Rossetti, thereby completing the original circle of the Pre-Raphaelites, since they had already met Holman Hunt in 1864 and Thomas Woolner in 1866.[242]

The English Pre-Raphaelite arts were attentive to a more realistic style of symbolism than was typical of the romantic tendencies of the Nazarene school.[243] Representing the English Pre-Raphaelite arts, Will tried to find an aesthetic that was understandable for nineteenth-century spectators.[244] The

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[240] *MM* 189

[241] *MM* 189

[242] Leng par. 9

[243] Cf. Landow "Pre-Raphaelites" par. 9

[244] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 8

parallel between Pre-Raphaelist Brown and Nazarene Overbeck, who, despite their different backgrounds, influenced each other, is reflected in Naumann's relationship to Will. Will and Naumann's friendship reflects the closeness of the two art movements of the Pre-Raphaelites and of the Nazarenes. Their frequent quarrels about art reflect the differences between these two movements. Due to their different points of view, Will and Naumann suggest and create different representations of Dorothea in Rome in the form of both hypothetical (by means of viewing her) and actual paintings (by means of painting her).

Right from the very beginning, Naumann pictures her as a Christian heroine – as a nun, as Madonna, and finally, when he actually paints her, as Santa Clara. From the representation as Santa Clara onwards, Will introduces his ideas about painting and fights all attempts to depict in painting Dorothea as a classical saint. Actual painting takes place when Dorothea and Casaubon pose for Naumann in his studio in Rome – Casaubon as Thomas Aquinas[245] and Dorothea as Santa Clara.[246] That is to say, they pose for a painting and Naumann chooses these two figures for them to represent. His main interest lies in painting Dorothea, but in order to cover his actual intentions, he offers to paint Casaubon as a learned religious man, and since such men are often represented accompanied by female saints and muses, he convinces Dorothea to play that part. The painting scene in *MM* is an ironic situation: Naumann wants to paint Dorothea but does not openly communicate this. He flatters Casaubon into posing as Thomas Aquinas and uses the pretext of needing a female saint beside Thomas Aquinas. His use of a religious figure for the representation is thus even more superficial than it would have been by simply creating a classical painting in which the symbols are more important than the people behind them.

Lessinite theory and Will's oppositions to Naumann's representation show that Will does not want to lock Dorothea into idealization. Naumann's representation of her by means of Christian symbols and figures, and the allusion to the discrepancy of secular together with religious elements in representations in general, provokes a critical attitude towards Naumann's (and with him the Nazarene's) technique of representation. An embodiment of this criticism is Will's objection to Naumann's assumption that "English ladies are […] at everybody's service as models."[247] Furthermore, Will warns Naumann of the danger of creating an idealized picture of Dorothea and, therefore, a distortion of reality. As has become visible in the Ariadne sculpture, perfection is a form of imprisonment, since the figure is doomed to remain in a frozen state, and one which has been chosen for her. In addition, Will has doubts about the possibility of representing the full meaning of an object in a painting, and he considers the loss of meaning caused by representation as a sort of restriction, since, in this manner, the whole meaning is reduced to the visible. The suggested representations of Dorothea do not convince him, since "[i]dealizing portraiture provides no coherent vision in this novel of incomplete insights"[248] and those portraits "perturb and dull conceptions instead of rising them."[249]

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[245] Cf. *MM* 215

[246] Cf. *MM* 216

[247] *MM* 191

[248] Witemeyer "History Painting" par. 42

Will states that “the true seeing is within”[250] and that Naumann does not do this enough justice. It becomes obvious that Will has great concerns about both Naumann’s way of representing and about visual representations as a whole.

A Pre-Raphaelite quality of Will worth mentioning here is that he incorporates and thus somehow unites the two fields of the written and the visual arts, being a poet and a painter at the same time. The Pre-Raphaelites were much concerned with the combination of these two arts. They expected a great gain from this combination: painting adds “the economy of picture”[251] and literature the narrative, the motion within the picture, to the artistic product. Will speaks in favor of the written arts claiming that it would capture more of the essence of an object. Lessing’s theories, expressed in this author’s work *Laokoön*, are evoked here; that is to say, the visual arts do not capture motion but are static. The Laocoön sculpture is once directly referred to,[252] which might be read as intertextual reference to Lessing’s work and theory. Will points out that women “change from moment to moment”[253] and thereby invokes the deficiency of visual representation, which only shows them in a pose. The Middlemarch clergyman Farebrother expresses a similar thought later in the text: he claims that an object "is not cut in marble – it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing…."[254] For its incapability of capturing mobility, Will feels that “painting stares at you with an insistent imperfection.”[255] And for their disinterest in movement in paintings, he despises Catholic history paintings as well as Naumann’s art to a great extent. The idea that paintings fail to convey the entire reality of an object goes back to the concept that by capturing only its outer form, insight into an object will be lacking. Will also criticizes and mocks Naumann’s egoism that makes him take advantage of any subject that he wants as an inspiration for a painting. Owing to the reasons developed so far, the choice of two Christian figures for the representations of the married couple is highly problematic. As a result, the lively discussions between Will and Naumann, mainly about the painting of Dorothea, continue.

Dorothea is not yet able to retain a representation of herself against all the classical figures suggested for her. However, Will fights for capturing Dorothea’s inner life and movement in all representations. In that way, he leads a Pre-Raphaelite discourse. Will includes Dorothea’s qualities as a person in his representations of her. He takes the time to put various and flexible frames around her and thus to capture her in different situations and study her more carefully than all the other characters who have, and keep, their pre-formed ideas of her. Will sees Dorothea’s superiority to an artwork, precisely because he sees her inner life – emotions and thoughts – and fights society’s ignorance of those. Will speculates about her feelings when he sees her unhappy in Rome:

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[249] *MM* 191

[250] *MM* 191

[251] *PL* 54

[252] Cf. *MM* 213

[253] *MM* 191

[254] *MM* 734-35

[255] *MM* 191

> She was not coldly clever and indirectly satirical, but adorably simple and full of feeling. She was an angel beguiled. It would be a unique delight to wait and watch for the melodious fragments in which her heart and soul came forth so directly and ingenuously. […]
>
> Dorothea was looking animated with a newly aroused alarm and regret, and Will was looking animated with his admiring speculation about her feelings.[256]

This is Will's ode to realism and Pre-Raphaelitism. In the representations of Dorothea, feelings show like "changing expression", as if lit by "sunny brightness" and captured in a spontaneous way which can only happen in a present-day context. He represents her as an angel, although not in a religious painting, but in an indoor scene. A religious painting would be too rigid and limiting for all he sees in his beloved. Her "heart and soul came forth" and influenced the surface.

Will tries to preserve the purity that reflected Dorothea's true ambition to an attentive observer in the initial scene. The purity for him is her image of herself uncorrupted by society's views. Her white linen should remain white until she is ready to paint on it. Accordingly, she appears to him again in a "plain dress." She takes a seat opposite Will,

> looking in her plain dress of some thin woollen-white material, without a single ornament on her besides her wedding-ring, as if she were under a vow to be different from all other women [...].[257]

The most obvious change in Dorothea's appearance from the initial scene to this one is her wedding ring, which is reminiscent of Dorothea's wedding, i.e., the most incisive incident since the first scene. The ring is named *en passant*, masking the great obstacle it represents between the two characters of Will and Dorothea. It becomes evident that Will is concerned with the representation of Dorothea, which he already showed in Rome, and that he insists on representing her in a simple and saintly way. He tries to keep Dorothea's white linen immaculate and free from their co-characters' colorings and he tries to keep her in the state of the initial paintings. In his opinion, this initial painting is the purest representation of her personality, since it has not been marked by society. The repetition of the initial scene serves as a reminder of Dorothea's true ambition.

There is, of course, a negotiation about the representation of Dorothea between Casaubon (and with him, society) and Will which Will eventually wins – however only when Dorothea herself starts to offer alternatives to the ones provided by society. Casaubon's idealized image of her as ideal wife and mother does not have the power to transcend a representation that includes emotions and inner conviction. This negotiation reflects the negotiation Dorothea will eventually have between her initial image of herself and her more mature one. She will conduct the negotiation between her *Selbstbild* and the *image of her* created by others which has not yet seriously taken place because it lacks Dorothea's contribution. She assumes that she simply is, and orients herself around existing concepts represented by Rosamond and Mary – the two other female protagonists of *Middlemarch* – in a way that demonstrates that she does not want to be them. However, she does not actively create

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[256] *MM* 209

[257] *MM* 363

her *Selbstbild*. Dorothea does not want to be a Rosamond with her prestigious, idealized ambitions and who is spectacular and successful with men and in society. Dorothea thinks that her ambitions resemble that of Mary who values simple life, truthfulness, and honesty, much like Dorothea showing an interest in the Middlemarch peasants. However, Dorothea does not want to be a Mary, either. She has ambitions of self-fulfillment, but does not have a realistic idea of how to pursue this; at this point, she does not have a clear *Selbstbild*.

Later in the novel, Dorothea will be in the same position as Rosamond because she does not have a clear conviction of her *Selbstbild* and has no control over it. Dorothea uses existing images (prejudice) to define what she does not want to be (Rosamond or Mary) and also what she wants to be when choosing the prejudiced image of a wife which her husband offers her. So it is impossible for anyone to grasp and nurture her inner life. Metaphorically speaking, the woman in *Mariana's room* needs to 'show' the three paintings to the overall spectator; otherwise, they get lost. In order to be able to do so, she has to see them first. Dorothea's weak representation of herself leads to the overall spectators' inability to see her inner life. The power of her own emotions only later starts to dawn on her. For the time being they are safely stored beneath the surface and can only be discussed in Impulse 1.

2.2.2 Impulse 1 – A Conflict of Images Begins to Manifest Itself

Dorothea does not participate in the negotiation and thus the creation of the *image of her* and offers no *Selbstbild* to hold up against the image society provides. Dorothea starts to feel that society, especially personified by her husband, only sees predetermined images of her. Each spectator could potentially shape her own version of a *Selbstbild* and it is here where she finds representational power. A spectator needs to be active in the creation of the *Selbtsbild*. This is the moral activity expected of a modern moral being. It is a pity to leave this chance unexploited. It is in this sense that the *inactive artist* is not tolerable in the novel. However, even after feeling the inconsistency in her own images and starting to suspect the fragmented nature of one's gaze, she falls into lethargy. The challenges presented by other characters' images reveal the existence of other images and influences on images she expected to be able to create herself. Dorothea avoids the negotiation because it would be proof or her previous illusion and she is suddenly afraid of the fuss she feels her participation in the creation of her own image would cause.

Her Illusion dawns on her when she and her husband have their first open fight which has been triggered by Dorothea's welcoming of Will in her husband's absence and her husband's jealousy – "a sort of jealousy which needs very little fire; it is hardly a passion, but a blight bred in the cloudy, damp despondency of uneasy egoism."[258]

> […] Dorothea remembered [their fight] to the last with the vividness with which we all remember epochs in our experience when some dear expectation dies, or some new motive is born. To-day she had begun to see that she had been under a wild illusion in expecting a response to her feeling from Mr. Casaubon, and she had felt the waking of a presentiment that there

[258] *MM* 221

> might be a sad consciousness in his life which made as great a need on his side as on her own.
>
> We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr. Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling – an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects – that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.[259]

Other people have perspectives too and create scenes by choosing what to highlight and what to leave in the dark. This, together with her own practice of only seeing what she wanted to see, caused her illusion. She feels a moral obligation, which is also a Puritan drive, to do more than just be still. However, she still feels that this would be possible within her marriage. Before, she idealized her husband and what she could do in a union with this man. Now she idealizes the bond of marriage itself and again reflects on what she can do – but still without the power of clearly knowing how to do this.

Her illusion about her husband and their marriage is exposed, namely that she had idealized Casaubon's studies and the good they could do for human kind.

> What attracts Dorothea to Casaubon […] is not the status as a text; he is not a book she wants to read. Rather, he is the author of a forthcoming book that will decode mysterious texts. […] In Casaubon's project, Dorothea sees the potential reduction of a confusing Babel of past history […] into a single verified narrative. […] The error to which both Casaubon and Dorothea are wed is their belief in a single privileged key to antiquity and life in general.[260]

Dorothea's "vocation is also a form of idealism."[261] And so are her "wish to do something of consequence in and for the world"[262] and her understanding that she can reach her goals through her husband. She aspires to "a share in Mr. Casaubon's learning"[263] and misuses him for her ambitions. Dorothea realizes that she can only be an idealized icon in Casaubon's eyes and not the woman and wife she would have expected to be. Her image of an ideal wife and his image of her collide. His expectations equal Rosamond's "narrow view of a wife's function"[264] which leaves no space for Dorothea's ambitions. Choosing a husband like Casaubon is a type of inactivity, the punishment of which Dorothea will feel painfully.

With the exposure of her illusions, yet another negotiation begins: the one between Dorothea's initial images and those she creates when she is more experienced. However, her illusions cannot yet be completely recognized by Dorothea, since they are still her inner view and not yet the *third painting*. Illusions continue to trouble her sight and an uncertainty about the ability to understand

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[259] *MM* 211

[260] McKelvy 300

[261] Cf. Deeds Ermarth 113

[262] Chase "Introduction" *Middlemarch in the 21st Century* 5

[263] *MM* 86

[264] Ashton xv

her surroundings sets in, which leads to a second illusion and with it a second idealization of another type of inactivity.

Owing to a lack of clear vision of the situation, Dorothea creates new illusions built on the frustration of the first ones: her idealization of extreme austerity,[265] abstinence, and martyrdom and the idea that this is what her life was meant for. She has an illusion that she can keep her inner views and her initial illusions and naiveté secret and, in that way, controlled, and that this is the right thing to do. She tries to avoid creating images that will be challenged again by not creating images at all. Nevertheless, she does create images: she fabricates excuses and explanations in the quiet of her mind and thus creates new inner views that trouble her sight.

She has a source of comfort in the memory and image of Will. With the young artist, she feels a resonance with her idea of fighting for ideals and ambitions. Her thoughts focus especially on Will when her suppression of the differing views of her and her husband becomes unbearable. In such situations, "[s]he [feels] an immense need of some one to speak to, and she had never before seen any one who seemed so quick and pliable, so likely to understand everything."[266] Will sees her disappointment, but she does not see yet that it shows. Feeling resonance for one's ideas forms a very powerful connection between people. However, Dorothea cannot allow an exchange and further flees into her thoughts.

She cannot learn because she hides and suppresses gained insights about herself. Impulse 1 could give her learning process a true impulse, but the insight gained in this step remains unexploited. There is a lack of understanding that frustration and the exposure of illusions is a requirement for learning, consciousness-building, and emancipation. Moreover, Dorothea does not recognize that action and a certain risk-taking are necessary for a modern woman. She does not even know that she and her ambitions are modern. She falls into a lethargy, her only activity being of a mental nature – like Mariana. She does not yet realize that a plan made in seclusion is worth nothing because it works with idealized ideas and stays on a meta-level, impossible to be transferred to real life. It is a repetition of knowledge uttered by others and not a true invention with the power for execution. Challenges help shape an idea and image. It takes Stage 2 to further her development process.

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[265] Cf. Bronfen "Tiefer als der Tag gedacht" 528

[266] *MM* 210

2.2.3 Stage 2 – The Shock of Confrontation and Realization Opens Eyes

The second stage takes place in Chapter 77 when *The Awakening Conscience* by Hunt (cf. Figure 12) is strongly evoked; it has a foreshadowing in Chapter 43 when Dorothea gets a glimpse of the scene for the first time; and a doubling in Chapter 83 when Dorothea mirrors the turning movement of the woman in the painting.

Figure 12 *The Awakening Conscience* by Hunt[267]

[267] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hunt-the-awakening-conscience-t02075>

2.2.3.1 Exposure and Humiliation

The Awakening Conscience is about exposure and humiliation. In this painting, a woman's illicit love affair and kept status are exposed. This exposure is a moment of humiliation for the woman who has just risen from her lover's lap:

> Initially the painting would appear to be one of a momentary disagreement between husband and wife, or brother and sister, but the title and a host of symbols within the painting make it clear that this is a mistress and her lover. The woman's clasped hands provide a focal point and the position of her left hand emphasizes the absence of a wedding ring. Around the room are dotted reminders of her "kept" status and her wasted life: the cat beneath the table toying with a bird; the clock concealed under glass; a tapestry which hangs unfinished on the piano; the threads which lie unravelled on the floor; the print of Frank Stone's *Cross Purposes* on the wall; Edward Lear's musical arrangement of Tennyson's poem "Tears, Idle Tears" which lies discarded on the floor, and the music on the piano, Thomas Moore's "Oft in the Stilly Night", the words of which speak of missed opportunities and sad memories of a happier past. The woman's discarded glove and the man's top hat thrown on the table top suggest a hurried assignation. The room is too cluttered and gaudy to be in a Victorian family home; the bright colours, unscuffed carpet, and pristine, highly-polished furniture speak of a room recently furnished for a mistress.[268]

This is not a room like the one in which Mariana finds herself. It is not oppressive. The woman here is not banished to the room; she chose to be here. It is not a room for staying in, but a place in which to spend some happy hours.

The artistic occupation depicted in the painting does not represent an action that tries to bring the present-day context into the woman's life, i.e., to reconcile a woman's moral and spiritual ideals with what is in her surroundings and what is realizable in her surroundings. This woman's artistic occupation, which in her case is music, is not the main focus in the painting; it is the pleasure that playing music together with a lover in a secret place brings according to the principle of "amor docet musicam"[269], i.e., love teaches music, or vice versa.

The woman's white dress *per se* could imply saintliness. However, here the white cloth does not serve as an indicator of purity, but offers a surface for things to be written and painted on: the woman's actions and society's response to those. The white dress becomes an image: "The very hem of the poor girl's dress, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street."[270]

The discussion of morality is conducted differently in this painting than in *Mariana*. The realist painting is no longer just the earthly and materialistic counterpart for the spiritual, or a reminder of the necessity of looking at the moral in nature and all that can be seen, but becomes the embodiment of social norms and the symbolic: conventions, prejudice, social, and moral law. The window is open and lets in the bright sunshine of a scene from nature, and with it the knowledge and

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[268] Prettejohn *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* 94

[269] Schneider 55

[270] Prettejohn *Beauty and Art* 111–13

consciousness of the woman's immoral deed. Her private life is exposed to the judgment of an outside spectator. The woman is about to get up from her sitting position on the man's lap and leans slightly forward, in contrast to Mariana who bends backward. She is captured by the outside and moves slightly towards it.

The woman's moral orientation has to take place based on her subjective judgment without the blind following of religious and moral codes to help her. The layering of the religious painting with century-old religious symbols (in the form of Mariana's stained-glass window) is lifted: there is no barrier but also no longer any protection. There is no clear moral reference at that moment, and this causes a scene of confusion, chaos, and shock. Her true moral state can be seen at that instant.

The top of the painting is bow-shaped, thus taking the form of a stained-glass window, i.e., a religious painting, like one of Mariana's windows. There is a mingling between religious and earthly symbols. The brightness of the scene evokes the sense of a beginning and an awakened conscience.[271] It is a moral discourse such as in one of Vermeer's interior scenes. In *Awakening Conscience*, spiritual and moral behavior is worked into painting with a present-day context. The woman accomplishes her moral mission of reflecting on her behavior and accepting the consequences of it and translates, in this sense, morality into the everyday; this makes obsolete an explicit layer of a religious painting, such as that on Mariana's window. Her moral behavior is her reflection on her. The look on her face is not dreamy, unlike Mariana's; it is fully awake, shocked even, hurting maybe. It an active look. After ceasing her artistic occupation, she has become active again;[272] she has started to deal with the consequences of her behavior.

2.2.3.2 Complication of Visuality – Discourse of Painting

The sight lines are much more complex in *Awakening Conscience* than they are in *Mariana*. More perspectives and thus more elements that potentially confuse clear sight are included in this painting. In Hunt's painting a woman stands in front of a window just like in *Mariana*. The fact that the woman in the *Awakening Conscience* stands in front of the window is not visible at first glance but can be detected only in the mirror's reflection. By standing between window and mirror, she grants a look at her back to both the male character of the painting and the spectator, although the latter's view is again provided by the reflection. In addition to the two directions of gazes already found in *Mariana* – namely the one by Mariana in the direction of the window and the supposed one on her from behind – further sight lines are to be found in this painting: i.e., the male character's gaze at her back and the spectator's of the overall scene onto the couple. The gaze at the painting on the wall that shows a scene in a courtyard and, therefore, resembles a window that faces the patio, is a further visual axis, but one that is not made use of. The mirror links the different lines of perspective and at the same time marks the two limits of the room and places the overall spectator of the scene *inside* the room. It is

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[271] Cf. Stanley Cavell's wordplay of *morning* and *mourning* described by Bronfen in *Crossmappings* 61

[272] Cf. the discarded tapestry in the *Mariana* painting

only when we realize that the woman stands in *front* of a window that we as overall spectators understand that we must be inside the room with the window behind us. The overall spectator is not at a safe distance outside the room looking at the interior scene: she is at the same time witness to, and accomplice of, the scene. The classical perspective has been omitted, and the painting is an optical challenge. What was only implicit in *Mariana* is made much more conscious here – namely that the act of observation is always at the basis of a painting, a scene. If a scene is not seen by any spectator, it will never be representable within a frame. The spectator of the painting finds herself in the middle of the image-making process. The mirror brings the outside perspective into the painting.

The painting is a staged confrontation. The woman is seen face on with eyes wide open. She looks in the direction of the spectator of the painting. However, rather than at the spectator, she looks slightly past her, out of the window that is supposedly behind the spectator. What the woman of the painting sees shocks and wakes her. At the same time, the scene and the woman's startled look have a surprising and awakening effect on the overall spectator. What it is that shocks both spectators is not clear. In any case, the confrontation awakens the will to understand the scene.

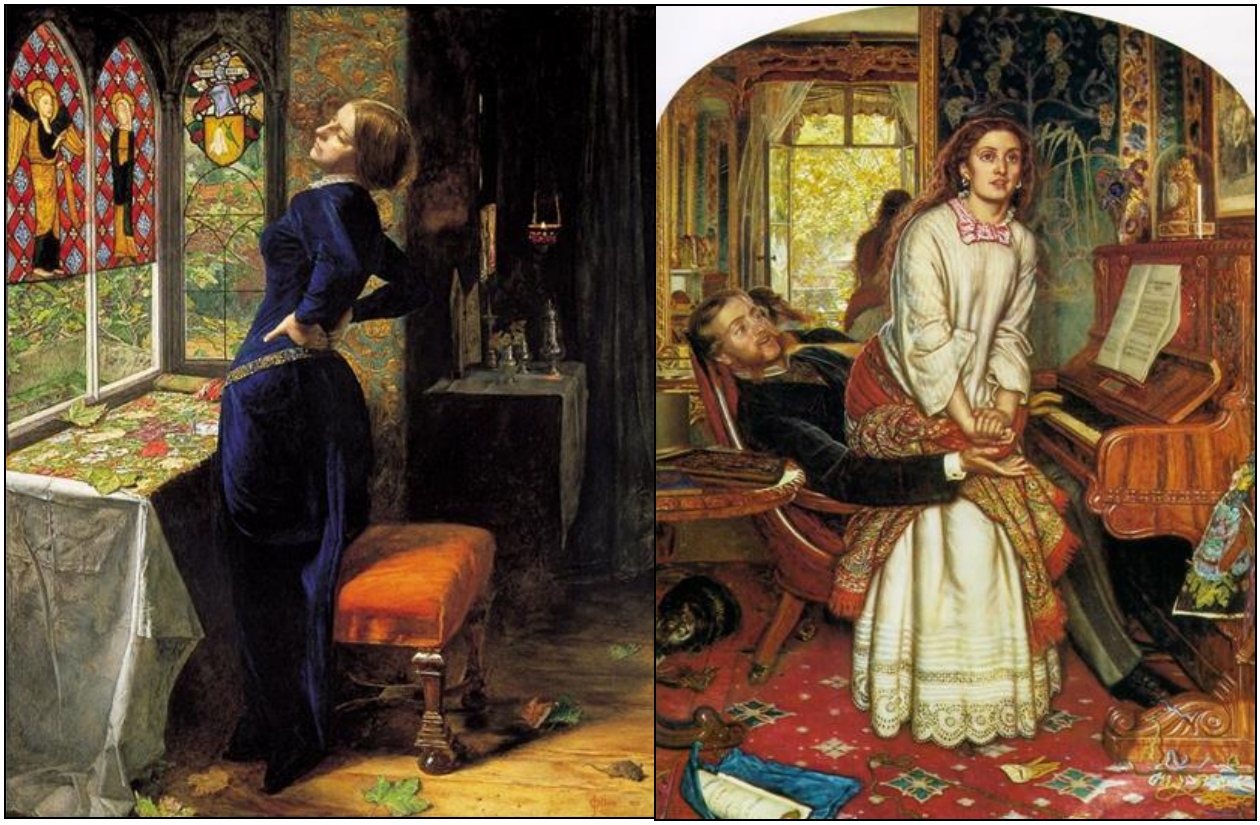

Figure 13 Comparison of *Mariana* and *Awakening Conscience*

2.2.3.3 Dorothea's View – *Startlers* in Actions

Dorothea witnesses the *Awakening Conscience* scene when she sees Rosamond and Will in an intimate scene in Rosamond's husband's absence.

> She saw, in the terrible illumination of a certainty which filled up all outlines, something which made her pause motionless, without self-possession enough to speak.
>
> Seated […] on a sofa […] she saw Will Ladislaw: close by him and turned towards him with a flushed tearfulness which gave a new brilliancy to her face sat Rosamond, her bonnet hanging back, while Will leaning towards her clasped both her upraised hand in his and spoke with low-toned fervour.
>
> Rosamond in her agitated absorption had not noticed the silently advancing figure, but when Dorothea, after the first immeasurable instant of this vision, moved confusedly backward and found herself impeded by some piece of furniture, Rosamond was suddenly aware of her presence, and with a spasmodic movement snatched away her hands and rose, looking at Dorothea who was necessarily arrested. Will Ladislaw, starting up, looked round also, and meeting Dorothea's eyes with a new lighting in them, seemed changing to marble. But she immediately turned them away from him and to Rosamond […].[273]

Dorothea is the overall spectator of the scene in the novel and there is a slight twist to the evoked painting compared to the underlying real painting: the woman in the painting looks directly at the overall spectator of the scene. Dorothea experiences the effect a painting can have on a spectator and the consequences of a spectator's perspective in any painting. She experiences *startlers* and starts to reread the assumed "illumination of certainty" and with it her ability to see and understand herself and her surroundings. Her bodily frame tingles: the experience of the confrontation with Rosamond is an enormous shock for it shatters all she believed in – the believed stability in painting/representation and the trustworthiness of her gaze.

Dorothea first faces the truth illusion. The terrible illumination of a certainty gives the scene a frame for the overall spectator of Dorothea. The young widow falls under the illusion that the frame shows a certainty. A scene is illuminated; the frame of the light cuts out a slice of reality for Dorothea. She will realize that what she counted as reality is not true: Will and Rosamond do not have a love affair. Dorothea also experiences the illusion of the stability and clear boundary of the frame. She stepped into the frame by entering the room. The second frame she sees, the mirror, creates a perspective *startler*. She can see herself within the scene and within the frame. This fact is imitated in the evoked painting by her bumping against an obstacle as she makes her way backwards while trying to leave the room unnoticed. This obstacle blocks her way and reminds her of the limit, the frame of the room behind her. She experiences that this scene involves her and that any scene does; one cannot stay apart; one is naturally a part of one's surroundings, since one is always a spectator with a selective vision and thus an influence on the outcome of the seen. Rosamond's direct look at Dorothea necessarily involves the latter even more – in fact, it arrests her.

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[273] *MM* 77

Dorothea then senses a *third meaning* which will lead to the suspicion of her *blind spot*. There is more to the scene than a first sight can grasp. Dorothea sees the two characters together and has the feeling that she must have missed something. She has an *uncanny* sense of the scene, since she has a memory of a scene just like the one in *The Awakening Conscience*.[274] It is the memory of her first encounter with Will and Rosamond playing music together at the piano.[275] The first *Awakening Conscience* scene left an impression which she has kept as a memory, i.e., as her inner views which only manifest themselves when she sees the scene for the second time.

Dorothea would have had the chance to see and recognize the scene the first time it presents itself to her, but misses the chance:

> When the servant had gone to deliver that message, Dorothea could hear sounds of music through an open window – a few notes from a man's voice and then a piano bursting into roulades. […]
>
> When the drawing-room door opened and Dorothea entered, there was a sort of contrast not infrequent in country life when the habits of the different ranks were less blent than now. Let those who know, tell us exactly what stuff it was that Dorothea wore in those days of mild autumn – that thin white woollen stuff soft to the touch and soft to the eye. It always seemed to have been lately washed, and to smell of the sweet hedges – was always in the shape of a pelisse with sleeves hanging all out of the fashion. […] By the present audience of two persons, no dramatic heroine could have been expected with more interest than Mrs. Casaubon. To Rosamond she was one of those county divinities not mixing with Middlemarch mortality, whose slightest marks of manner or appearance were worthy of her study; moreover, Rosamond was not without satisfaction that Mrs. Casaubon should have an opportunity of studying *her*. […]
>
> Dorothea [was] aware that there was a gentleman standing at a distance, but seeing him merely as a coated figure at a wide angle. […]
>
> He had already taken up his hat before Dorothea entered. She coloured with surprise, but put out her hand with a smile of unmistakable pleasure saying – "I did not know it was you: I had no thought of seeing you here."[276]

In the first *Awakening Conscience* moment, the two characters' view of the overall spectator of the painting is described: the scene is written from their perspective. Dorothea's opportunity to see the woman and her fate is left unexploited in the first scene and only taken advantage of in the repetition which also shows her own fate.

Dorothea's inner view is externalized and manifests itself in the second scene. It is a shock and an awakening moment that uncovers that she has missed something. Realizing further information which is possible in the second scene changes the face of all that has happened before. Dorothea's gaze is completely different in the second scene. It is not only the woman's gaze in the painting that is completely awake, but also and foremost hers. She would already have had a *startler* in the first evoked scene when she suddenly realizes that the young gentleman is Will. She should

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[274] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 20

[275] *MM* 432

[276] *MM* 432–3

have found something odd already and thus discovered her blind spot. The slumbering knowledge of the "many connected memories"[277] seems to have manifested itself all of a sudden. Her reaction to the first scene was that she "found herself thinking with some wonder that Will Ladislaw was passing his time with Mrs. Lydgate in her husband's absence."[278] Dorothea's inner view begins to externalize itself and become the *third painting*. Memory is put into a frame. In the remembered scene, Dorothea wears the white dress: a foreshadowing of her experience – her story that is to be written on. It is the experience of shortsightedness exposed.

Moreover, Dorothea faces two mirrors: the back of Rosamond's white dress, the back of her consciousness, and Rosamond's eyes, the consciousness of being exposed. Dorothea sees the back of Rosamond's white dress which stands for the back of the canvas or, in other words, for something that Rosamond does not know or tries to hide; in any case, does not want to represent. The *back of the white dress* becomes the canvas onto which Dorothea paints what she expects to see in the scene and has tried to hide in her unconscious until this moment. By showing the *back of the dress*, the mirror overcomes the conventional painting perspective and multiplies the opportunities to paint in this painting. The mirror sees the entire scene that is represented in *The Awakening Conscience*.

A Lacanian mirror stage is enacted in the gaze exchange in the scene. In Lacanian theory, as soon as an infant recognizes herself in a mirror reflection, she perceives herself as an object and thus not as fragmented as she has otherwise perceived her own body. This experience enables the infant to accelerate the subject formation. The idea of seeing oneself reflected back to oneself as a trigger for one's development and subject formation is transferred to the gaze mirroring between Rosamond and Dorothea in *The Awakening Conscience* scene. In Rosamond's eyes, Dorothea sees herself reflected – and vice versa. Rosamond sees the overall spectator's interpretations of the scene in the spectator's eyes and, in addition, she sees the expression of the intruder's own guilt painted on her face.

Consciousness-building happens through the interaction represented in the gaze exchange. Bringing certain elements to the surface and into the frame of representation is always a joint venture of more than one character. The elements that emerge through the interaction depend on the constellation of the two characters. Each constellation would bring another reality into the frame of the joint consciousness. The clash of different perspectives that embody each spectator's "brood of desire"[279] is what creates the production of a joint image.

Dorothea mirrors her fate to Rosamond's. *The Awakening Conscience* teaches compassion.[280]

> In Hunt's painting the awakening conscience belongs to a fallen woman. In *Middlemarch* the only woman in danger of falling is Rosamond Lydgate, yet she remains unrepentant while the conscience of the woman who only fleetingly senses Rosamond's corruption is stricken. Nevertheless, Dorothea

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[277] *MM* 434

[278] *MM* 434

[279] *MM* 324

[280] Cf. Ruskin 1904 cited in Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 29

> feels guilty about her own behaviour because the sounds heard through Lydgate's open window objectify it for her: Mrs. Lydgate's compromised situation with Will provides an analogue for Mrs. Casaubon's.[281]

She also got into trouble for meeting Will in her husband's absence. Her deeds were measured by a view that represents the social code – her husband's. Dorothea knows what it feels like to be judged by a restricting conventional gaze (Casaubon's). She shows compassion in her unwillingness to treat Rosamond with the same prejudice that society would have – which would be an empty form of convention and not a more sophisticated and nuanced gaze.

Dorothea even takes the effect of the mirroring as far as to completely switch position with Rosamond in that woman's evoked painting of *The Awakening Conscience* scene in which Will and Dorothea declare their love for each other. She switches position and steps into Rosamond's shoes. She fulfills a *position switch* between the two scenes. The position switch is nothing other than a spectator's ability to picture other spectators' perspectives of herself, i.e., of bringing other spectators' *images of her* into a frame and thus making them visible and conscious for herself. The position switch produces the image of what a subject looks like to other subjects in a moment of confrontation. In this sense, confrontation makes self-reflection possible. This is a real love scene – an imaginary painting with romantic tendencies:

> While he was speaking there came a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other – and the light seemed to be the terror of a hopeless love. Dorothea darted instantaneously from the window; Will followed her, seizing her hand with a spasmodic movement; and so they stood, with their hands clasped, like two children, looking out on the storm, while the thunder gave a tremendous crack and roll above them, and the rain began to pour down. Then they turned their faces towards each other, with the memory of his last words in them, and they did not loose each other's hands. […]
>
> Her lips trembled, and so did his. It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other lips; but they kissed tremblingly, and then they moved apart.
>
> The rain was dashing against the window-panes as if an angry spirit were within it, and behind it was the great swoop of the wind; it was one of the those moments in which both the busy and the idle pause with a certain awe.
>
> Dorothea sat down on the seat nearest to her, a long low ottoman in the middle of the room, and with her hands folded over each other on her lap, looked at the drear outer world.[282]

The "flash of lighting" presents a series of inverted movements compared to the first *Awakening Conscience* scenes with Rosamond as the start of the scene: Rosamond snatches her hand away in a spasmodic movement while Will seizes Dorothea's hand with a spasmodic movement. Rosamond stands up after the moment in question; Dorothea sits down. The sun provides the lighting of Rosamond's scene; the flash that of Dorothea's scene. Sunny weather in the first vs. storm, rain, and lightning in the second scene. The terrible illumination of certainty was only for Dorothea to see and

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[281] Leng "Dorothea Brooke's 'Awakening Consciousness'" par. 22

[282] *MM* 810

was an illusion vs. “a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other” producing a shared certainty which is in fact a certainty. The word certainty is not used in the second scene but a much vaguer phrase (“seemed to be”), when Dorothea knows that every scene is vague, is used instead. Rosamond looks out of the painting at Dorothea, as opposed to Will and Dorothea, who turn their faces towards each other. Also, some parallels help to identify the scene as a doubling of the scene with Rosamond in it: there are clasped hands in both scenes and both scenes create a sense of awe.

Being able to do the *position switch* gives Dorothea power. She mirrors but also contradicts Rosamond’s behavior, which shows that she has influence over the scene. She can influence the scene when her inner view is made *the third painting*. She adds romantic imagery (storm, passion, powerful emotions) to the scene, indicating that it is not important what you see in the scene but what it induces in a spectator and what she starts to see about herself: such as emotions, character traits, and fears. This is a Pre-Raphaelite painting approach. There is force in this scene which is reflected in nature. It is, in this manner, a very different scenario to Rosamond’s *Awakening Conscience* scene. Dorothea has managed to shape it.

During the *position switch*, both spectator and the mirrored spectator are observed and discovered. The spectator pictures herself from the mirrored person’s perspective. In order to be able to do this, she has to understand the other person’s perspective. She adopts the other’s views and, with it, the other’s supposed inner views that potentially influence what this other person sees. The spectator becomes aware of an image of herself that is not her *Selbstbild*. This makes her aware that both the image of her by the other person and her *Selbstbild* are representations, i.e., a bringing to light of both their inner views. In this manner, the position switch is at once both a self- and other-reflection. Before Dorothea manages the position switch, a full realization of her inner views concerning the situations and topics that matter to her must be achieved. After witnessing Rosamond’s *Awakening Conscience* scene, Dorothea is ready to reread the scene, since she is ready to reread her part in the scene. The two-fold reflection process (mirroring and thinking) has started. So has the externalization of her inner view which will lead to the making of *the third painting*. She is startled into a response in the form of her own experience and a body frame that is “shaken by sobs.”[283]

A bodily response is a requirement to gain consciousness. The reaction to the *Awakening Conscience* scene of the three characters involved in the scene announced such a bodily response which will only lead to a total break-up of the body frame in Dorothea’s case – only to make room for consciousness. In their reactions, Dorothea mirrors herself rather with highly emotional Will than with perplexed and frozen Rosamond. Will and Rosamond have almost immediate reactions. “Rosamond and Will stood motionless […]. She knew that Will had received a severe blow, but she had been little used to imagining other people’s states of mind […].”[284] Then suddenly Will’s fury comes out “as if his whole frame were tingling.” Will’s fury develops into rage as he blames Rosamond for the loss of his

[283] *MM* 786

[284] *MM* 777

beloved that he expects to face. “When Will had ceased to speak she had become an image of sickened misery: her lips were pale, and her eyes had a tearless dismay in them.”[285]

> The vindictive fire was still burning in him, and he could utter no word of retraction; but it was nevertheless in his mind that having come back to this hearth where he had enjoyed a caressing friendship he had found calamity seated there – he had had suddenly revealed to him a trouble that lay outside the home as well as within it. And what seemed foreboding was pressing upon him as with slow pincers: – that his life might come to be enslaved by this helpless woman who had thrown herself upon him in the dreary sadness of her heart. But he was in gloomy rebellion against the fact that his quick apprehensiveness foreshadowed to him, and when his eyes fell on Rosamond’s blighted face it seemed to him that he was the more pitiable of the two: for pain must enter into its glorified life of memory before it can turn into compassion. / And so they remained for many minutes, opposite each other, far apart, in silence; Will’s face still possessed by a mute rage, and Rosamond’s by a mute misery. The poor thing had no force to fling out any passion in return; the terrible collapse of the illusion towards which all her hope had been strained was a stroke which had too thoroughly shaken her.”[286]

Rosamond’s shock of “the collapse of illusion” makes her faint and collapse right away. Dorothea’s melt-down moment in which she drops her illusions and her act takes longer, but the strong emotions that she still holds back can also already be suspected in her:

> […] anyone looking at her might have thought that though she was paler than usual she was never animated by a more self-possessed energy. And that was really her experience. […] She had seen something so far below her belief, that her emotions rushed back from it and made it an excited throng without an object. She needed something active to turn her excitement out upon. And she would carry out the purpose with which she had started in the morning, of going to Freshitt [her sister’s home] and Tipton [her uncle’s home] to tell Sir James and her uncle all that she wished them to know about Lydgate, whose married loneliness under his trial now presented itself to her with new significance, and made her more ardent in readiness to be his champion. She had never felt anything like this triumphant power of indignation in the struggle of her married life, in which there had always been a quickly subduing pang; and she took it as a sign of new strength. […][287]

Her sister Celia was “a little uneasy at this Hamlet-like raving,”[288] a raving caused by first, the shattering of her high ideals of Will; second, the realization of Rosamond’s (another wife’s) unhappiness that brings out her own desolate state. Dorothea maintains her demeanor, even visits the truthful, piteous, and humbly happy Garth family, until her “limit of resistance was reached, and she [sinks] back helpless with the clutch of inescapable anguish.”[289]

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[285] *MM* 779

[286] MM 779-80

[287] *MM* 776

[288] *MM* 776

[289] *MM* 786

2.2.4 Impulse 2 – Full Realization

A spectator's realization of what her inner views are is the self-conscious response to a painting, reflecting her mature state of mind. Realization is meant in its two senses: understanding and making/becoming visible, in other words, the externalization of inner views. A spectator understands the principle of representation and is able to reread the situation by asking the question of what her stake in it is. Moreover, a spectator lets the immediate experience have an effect on her, i.e., she lets the painting speak to her.

The rereading process takes time, since it is learning and gaze individualization in retrospect. Becoming a subject always takes effect retroactively.[290] Rereading means going back to formerly lived scenes and adding information gained in the meantime, i.e. reading the scene again with more precise background information, a greater awareness of individual viewing, a greater interest in more precise and objective vision, and more extensive knowledge about the frames of reference used by others. In painting terms, one could say that rereading is creating a new version of a scene with a different background. The background has an influence on the meaning of the foreground which is then seen in a different light, i.e., as a different representation. Rereading is intellectual work which facilitates a conscious choice about the nature and power of one's gaze.

2.2.4.1 Vigils or When Inner Views Become Distinguishable Images

The *Awakening Conscience* scene forces Dorothea to respond. She lives through a night of struggling with herself from which she rises with clarified vision. During the vigil, she sees and makes use of conflicting images. It forces her to start the conscious shaping of her gaze and the way she wants to see her surroundings. This vigil brings with it clarity of her intentions. The chaotic world of the night[291] breaks open conventions and eases in a dialog with that which Dorothea has tried to keep a secret and the choice she has tried to avoid.

> There were two images – two living forms that tore her heart in two, as if it had been the heart of a mother who seems to see her child divided by the sword, and presses one bleeding half to her breast while her gaze goes forth in agony towards the half which is carried away by the lying woman that has never known the mother's pang.
>
> Here, with the nearness of an answering smile, here within the vibrating bond of mutual speech, was the bright creature whom she had trusted – who had come to her like the spirit of morning visiting the dim vault where she sat as the bride of a worn-out life; and now, with a full consciousness which had never awakened before, she stretched out her arms towards him and cried with bitter cries that their nearness was a parting vision: she discovered her passion to herself in the unshrinking utterance of despair.
>
> And there, aloof, yet persistently with her, moving wherever she moved, was the Will Ladislaw who was a changed belief exhausted of hope, a detected illusion – no, a living man towards whom there could not yet struggle any

[290] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 145

[291] Cf. Bronfen *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht* 530

> wail of regretful pity, from the midst of scorn and indignation and jealous offended pride. The fire of Dorothea's anger was not easily spent, and it flamed out in fitful returns of spurning reproach. Why had he come obtruding his life into hers, hers that might have been whole enough without him? Why had he brought his cheap regard and his lip-born words to her who had nothing paltry to give in exchange? He knew that he was deluding her – wished, in the very moment of farewell, to make her believe that he gave her the whole price of her heart, and knew that he had spent it half before. Why had he not stayed among the crowd of whom she asked nothing – but only prayed that they might be less contemptible?[292]

She perceives two images of Will. The first shows him as "the spirit of morning visiting the dim vault." It is the figure that brought her happy moments during her painful marriage. The second is of Will as "a living man towards whom there could not yet struggle any wail of regretful pity." The second image shows how he has aroused her anger by disclosing her deluded picture of him and thereby hurting her. In addition, it shows Will as an independent character who has the power to awaken uncontrollable feelings in her instead of those she wanted him to produce in her during her marriage. The two images are strongly juxtaposed, and feeling their difference causes her great pain. She knows that she has to choose which representation is the image that she will have from now on of the young man. The first image seems the more comfortable, conveying trust and a bond between the two, whereas the second arouses her offended pride and the jealousy induced by Will's behavior. She fights the second image, but loses energy and finally subsides into sleep, from which she awakens the next morning with a ready decision on what to do next.

In this scene, Dorothea is forced to lift the veil of her sight-troubling inner views and let go of her illusions, which cause her mental and bodily agony. She replaces an idealized image of Will with a realistic one. In "her event only"[293], she allows herself to feel shock and suffering and becomes conscious of the existence of materiality and the interaction of inner life and form. Her inner views materialize. In other words, she is forced to deal with materiality and come to a down-to-earth conclusion. Only when bringing her experience into the present-day context is Dorothea able to understand the scene she saw at Rosamond's. Her response and clarification come with a delay. A subject needs to bear the time and pressure until clarification is reached. Her inner view in the form of her second illusion that grief is her calling in life becomes conscious and can be used for her future thoughts, decisions, and plans.

> In the chill hours of the morning twilight, when all was dim around her, she woke – not with any amazed wondering where she was or what had happened, but with the clearest consciousness that she was looking into the eyes of sorrow. […] she had waked to a new condition: she felt as if her soul had been liberated from its terrible conflict; she was no longer wrestling with her grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer of her thoughts.[294]

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[292] *MM* 786–7

[293] *MM* 787

[294] *MM* 787

Dorothea recognizes that her second illusion was as wrong as the first one. Having fallen into a second illusion shows Dorothea the danger of creating illusions and makes her aware of the mechanism of how this can happen. During the second impulse, she manages to make the process of falling into and uncovering illusions conscious.

2.2.4.2 Consciousness Building Means Self-Consciousness Building

Recognizing the structure of how consciousness about a scene is built means creating self-consciousness. Consciousness about a scene is reached by reading scenes and understanding how the representation of the scene in just this way came into being. By reading a scene, a spectator reads her motivations for creating the scene in a certain way – she reads herself. Self-consciousness thus implies that this process is understood. Pippin offers an explanation out of Hegel's definition of self-consciousness:

> "Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness." (§175) He specifies this in an equally famous passage from §178. "Self-consciousness exists *in* and *for* itself because and by way of its existing in and for itself for an other; i.e., it exists only as recognized."[295]

Self-consciousness only becomes such when it is the product of one spectator's consciousness and the differentiation between this one with one that is not this spectator's consciousness – when a dialectic among different self-consciousnesses happens.

Challenges to the *Selbstbild* are necessary to even start the process of creating a *Selbstbild.* Confrontations should not be avoided, but viewed differently – namely as opportunities. Challenges help a subject recognize where ambitions are limited by society and what is possible in society, but they should also stimulate an appetite to become creative about finding solutions for enlarging one's influence within given limits/frames. After a blow, it takes patience and endurance until one sees the solution one wants to make. Subjects are always within frames shaped by their own inner views, others' inner views, circumstances, societal laws, and natural laws. One needs to understand where one is not free to also see where one is. Making this distinction is an act of reason and experience.

Dorothea makes up her mind to make as much as possible of her position within the frame she holds. She has improved her way to handle disappointments and adopted a new idealism, namely that of knowing that there is more to any scene and situation than can be grasped at once, but wanting to grasp as much as possible and work with it. She understands that much is lost when one is absorbed. She does not fall into despondency towards her future. She thus follows Hegel's concept of a *Begierde* to create self-consciousness[296] that is inherent in any modern moral being. She recognizes the power of looking closely, which makes her capable of acting. "Dorothea wished to acknowledge that she had not the less an active life before her because she had buried a private joy."[297]

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[295] Pippin *Hegel on Self-Consciousness* 38

[296] Cf. Pippin 39

[297] *MM* 789

Consciousness means responsibility – to act and make as much as possible of the gained knowledge – a very Puritan and realist approach which Dorothea now adopts. It is hard work to relieve oneself of uncertainty and build the necessary inner conviction and confidence to act and not let pushbacks bring one back into the self-imposed "moral imprisonment"[298] of believing that one's life is meant to be painful, thinking that there is nothing that can be done about a situation, and hiding your ideas.

Bringing back the image of the *female artist* allows for a comparison of Dorothea's taking action with her gained experience and the act of artistic creation. It is that of a woman who does not hide behind another person and use that person to transmit her ideas. She uses her own strengths and creates resonance herself with which to nourish her ideas. Artists need to express themselves with the material they are provided with. To create, an artist needs to be subordinate to the material: she has what she has and has to do something with it. This requires a developing capability and creative and innovative power. It also requires courage and confidence that her productive work and her understanding of the world count and can make a difference. Dorothea turns the *inactive female artist* in the *Mariana* painting into an *active female artist* in the scene through a window frame that she created from her boudoir window, i.e., from the Mariana position, the morning after her vigil.

2.2.5 Stage 3 – Self-Conscious and In Charge

The chapter that displays Dorothea's clear view of herself and her situation in the form of an evoked painting that can be considered an artistic creation and as the basis of Stage 3 is introduced by Wordsworth's poem "Ode to Duty."[299] This provides the painting with a realist frame and her composition in it. It is her *third painting*,[300] the canvas that Will had saved for her. Dorothea presents her creation to the viewer; she is in the Mariana pose showing her artistic creation. She has taken an action that is in contrast to her former inactive state in the Mariana scenes; she lets the overall spectator of the *Mariana* painting forget that she could be a subject within the Mariana painting; and she directs the overall spectator's attention to her window (her frame) and creates a painting from what she sees outside. There has been a change of position and Dorothea has become the spectator-painter:

> […] there was a light piercing into the room. She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving – perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life,

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[298] *MM* 274

[299] *MM* 784

[300] This is my own term, following Barthes's concept of the *third meaning* described in Bittner Wiseman 21

> and could neither look out on it form her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining.[301]

Dorothea manages to respond to the painting described in this scene. The shift from seeing to feeling is even represented in her painting. From the beginning of the painting description up to "pearly light" it is all about seeing. After that she starts to feel the scene and thus respond to the seen. She recognizes the "wakings" of the world which is a reflection of her own awakening. Her awakening is connected to that of the world and her responding to the world allows her to contribute to and influence it. Dorothea opens the curtain and veil of false ambitions and looks out of the window at an ordinary family at the beginning of an ordinary day – granting her an outlook at her ordinary future. For the first time, Dorothea sees a picture that is not prompted by illusions and idealizations. For the first time, she is able to see an ideal union of Christian idealism and social realist aspiration.

Dorothea looks at the ordinary life of what could be a Barbizon painting – a reflection of the healthy family life she encountered from her visit to the Garth family just before her vigil – and adds two layers: a layer of her idealism and a layer of her mental image in the form of her experience – her experience being that ideals can be carried out, but only with full consciousness of what it takes to carry them out and what the consequence is. In their peacefulness and piety, the family also recalls the holy family[302]. Dorothea manages to enhance the ordinary scene with life and moral meaning. In her painting the "pearly light" triggers the shift from seeing to feeling and being part – in unison – with the "palpitating life." It adds a glimpse of heavenly light to the scene, a task that the gold in early Renaissance paintings also fulfilled. This scene is a moment of private devotion, one that could take place at the domestic altar in Mariana's room. Dorothea has learned to unite Mariana's three layers and, by uniting those, she creates a painting according to Pre-Raphaelite norms. She has learned to see, accept, and use the *multi-layeredness* of reality. Dorothea's development of visual perception is depicted as the change from the view of the avenue of limes, in the sense of a vague and uncertain view, towards the future, "a bit of road that lay in view"[303], which is a logical path for her next steps, steps to be taken one at a time.

Dorothea's self-conscious view is only possible after adjusting her position. Dorothea's painting is her *Selbstbild*. The idea that a change in the beholder of a landscape picture has an effect on the aesthetics of the picture conforms to Ruskin's concern that the appearance of landscape may "[intimate] the possibility of salvation through moral struggle."[304] This painting is Dorothea's deepest conviction of how she wants to see life. It is the representation of her conviction. There is no negotiation for a moment – this is her event. She forms an image so strong that it will hold when negotiation starts again. Uncertainty weakened her position. She now has a stronger position, with a clearer understanding of her own situation and the situation around her and a stronger image to hold up against images other people make of her.

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[301] *MM* 788

[302] Cf. Bronfen *Crossmappings* 62

[303] *MM* 788

[304] Witemeyer "Landscape and the Beholder" par. 70

She finds the true nature of idealism, i.e., what idealism is for her: "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?"[305] In the morning after her vigil, she decides to go see Rosamond to offer her consolation for the problems in her marriage. Ashton comments:

> Dorothea's achievement is a purely personal one: an act of human kindness to a couple in marital difficulties. There is nothing feminist or progressive about her action or the narrator's presentation of it, in contrast to the more radical moments in the novel in which George Eliot airs a deeply felt anger at the limitation of possibilities for women.[306]

There is no heroism intended, but the desire to make a difference for herself. She focuses her decision on the good she can actively do. Her action is compassionate and charitable, but it is compassionate in that it follows the principle of the perspective switch and it is an action with an effect and resonance. It is just as much concerned with the other person's perspective, needs, and motivations as with her own. It might appear at first that her action is unimportant and fits with what women of her time are allowed to do – 'nothing feminist or progressive' as Ashton calls it. However, this action has an effect, much more than the creation of her grand ideals which she lived out in silence. The way Dorothea finds an action that has meaning for her, expresses her ideals of charity, and manages to have an effect in her present-day context and within the boundaries of what is possible, makes her an example of an awakened and thus active and initiative woman. This attitude is highly progressive and it has the power to influence many women of later generations.

Dorothea's painting represents her emancipation. She creates a painting that is seen. Formerly, in the Mariana pose, the spectator of the scene only looked at her and was not aware of her own perspectives. At the end, Dorothea enforces that her painting is according to her liking and that it is seen. Dorothea as the subject of the *Mariana* painting is forgotten for a moment. Her painting is in the spotlight, i.e., the supposed spectator of the imaginary painting of Dorothea in front of a window chooses to highlight her creation.

Her personal change in viewpoint, shown by the change of point of view from being part of representations made by others to spectator-painter, renders the creation of a *Selbstbild* possible. Creating a *Selbstbild* is not a one-off event. Otherwise, the *Selbstbild* would become an archaic symbol as all scenes do as soon as they are enclosed within a frame. The creation of the *Selbstbild* is a continuous process and she knows it. However, the scene that clarifies to her what her next steps should be is frozen for a moment to allow it to be made visible to her. When looking at her painting, Dorothea experiences that she has the power of innovation. She has developed her gaze from her window, begun to use it, and has created a scene that relates to her and that looks very different from her initial one. The innovation that she achieves in her vision brings liberation and emancipation from self-imposed and other-imposed frames. Dorothea has managed to turn a situation around. Instead of simply consuming, she produces first and foremost a solution for how to see herself. All attempts to teach Dorothea to understand art fail in the novel. Only her own experience teaches her to come up with a representation that can be considered a refined and mature perspective.

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[305] *MM* 733–4

[306] Ashton xix

2.3 From Self-Consciousness to Self-Confidence and Emancipation

In consolidating the model, I summarize what learnings from Dorothea's story are possible under the assumption that the model suggests psychologically and philosophically established rules of consciousness building and moral development. These learnings are not uttered by the character of Dorothea, but can be deduced by the reader and are likely to have been a concern in Eliot's morals. A sharpened gaze allows for emancipation. A sharpened or keen gaze is built on elevated awareness, power of observation, experience with illusions and disillusionment, keen alertness to deception, the ability to recognize the value of making sense of visual information, and a willingness to look closely, shift one's focus from oneself to one's surroundings and ultimately attain the ability to picture oneself in the eyes of onlookers. All the attributes of a keen gaze result in clear-sightedness which allows subjects to have a realistic appraisal of themselves and their situation in relation to others; i.e., to have a realistic, sensible, and meaningful ambition for themselves in life. By that, they liberate themselves more and more from other people's assessment of, and stake in, their position and role. They know what is possible and/or are able to recognize very quickly if something they strive for needs adjustment – and they adjust. Emancipation takes place when one's own image and position can be influenced by oneself. To have a vision is a requirement for modern moral being and emancipation is necessary to see this vision through.

A vision and a realist appraisal of how to implement it and give a visible form to this energy are developed by gaze refinement. Sharpening one's gaze and awareness is a learning process. A keen gaze is the product of constant learning and the development of one's personality. It can never be completely achieved but can only be strived for. Improving one's clear-sightedness does not happen all at once: it is a lifelong occupation. It takes many opportunities to see something wrongly or incompletely, to realize its incompleteness, and thereby to learn that much more could be discovered about a situation. Learning means to experience incomplete, fragmented sights and to develop ways of finding the missing parts.

Learning means bringing one unconscious item about oneself after another to the surface and understanding the process that allows this to happen. This is the process of gradually lifting the veil of the unconscious that has clouded sight and judgment. Learning means being able to recognize the parts that were missed in an image, the incompleteness of any image, and the reason for this which lies in the nature of vision. The second part of the learning process consists of finding ways to deal with and make use of the insight of incomplete vision. There is no objective reality, but all reality is subjectively constructed, an image. Missing parts are pieces of information hidden from one's vision because they were not conscious – information that stays hidden inside a spectator or in other spectators.

Interaction brings to light different perspectives that make spectators aware of their own perspectives and allow them to recognize incompleteness in their image because of a comparison with another's image. Five steps describe what goes on when different perspectives collide between interacting people: (1) The spectators sense that there is something else there; there is more to it than expected. (2) They realize that they could have known this because it was in their subconscious. (3) They realize that it was unconscious and make it conscious. (4) They use the newly gained knowledge

and incorporate it into their future decisions and plans. (5) They have a more complete image of themselves and their motivations and are ready to be confronted with the next challenge. These five steps repeat themselves.

True learning is only possible through experience and can never take place theoretically. Experiences are formed when perspectives clash with others and it is through experiences that gained knowledge is stored. Adjusting the gaze is a mental as well as a physical activity which manifests itself on the body. One's understanding of the world must be shaken, shattered even, in order to bring one to work on adjusting and developing one's gaze. Knowledge has to come from the unconscious into the conscious and even into the physical to program memory and experience anew. Interaction allows for the making of experience: interaction leads to a clash of perspectives, which again leads to experience and leaning. Disquiet and reaction to it are necessary elements of the learning process.

Perception and sensation are united in an image. Pictures facilitate simultaneous sense stimulus and prompt several impressions at the same time in the spectator. It is an immediate effect on the spectator that moves her and pushes her a step forward, i.e., it creates action and starts the process. Grasping an image is an experience. Seeing, processing information, and learning thus happen via a different channel than through cognitive action. However, reason and the act of reading and structuring information are necessary for making the gained knowledge applicable.

Learning means revealing gaps in current circumstances in comparison to desired or expected conditions and the development of ideas to fill these gaps. Shocking moments of colliding beliefs uncover illusions and, at the same time, present opportunities to act. There is the danger of falling into a lethargy/depression after realizing that one has been mistaken. A solution-finding process needs to be triggered – instead of retreating to a waiting and hiding mode. Colliding perspectives not only make conscious misjudged situations but also misjudged and inefficient ambitions, which allows for correction.

There is no *one* language to decipher and explain all reality. There is no generally applicable key to understanding people and situations, but information can be gained in interaction and through experience in the moment. Nobody knows what confrontations and situations one can expect. Knowing oneself better helps in the understanding of situations and in making sense of what one experiences. At some point, one's perception is sharpened and the knowledge of self increased so that there will be fewer illusions (or illusions will be detected faster) and the process will be curtailed by reaching Impulse 2 right away, without also needing Impulse 1.

The Awakening Conscience Model is a plea for action: the taking and exercising of creative power. It demonstrates the change from a state when activity was not possible for women to a state when inactivity became immoral. It is not so much about what one can do to avoid illusions and idealizations, but what one can learn from disillusions. It describes an awakening into interaction and response. The fear of presenting one's own ideas can be slowly removed and innovations promoted. Individual behavior means to deal with one's inner images and to develop a self-reflection competence as well as the capability of a position switch. It is this kind of egoism that is suggested in the analysis of Dorothea's development process, not a sinful and meaningless form. Moreover, it is this kind of

individualism and selfishness that is necessary to see an ambition through and that distinguishes the heroine from moral and Puritan characters of earlier times and make her modern.

When conventions are lifted and known states left, one has to be strong and flexible to deal with whatever one might be confronted with next. Self-confidence is necessary and self-confidence is attained through self-consciousness – of knowing oneself and being aware as much as possible of one's inner views (cf. the double meaning of the German *Selbstbewusstsein*). Clear-sightedness is achieved only by removing uncertainty about oneself and strengthening one's self-consciousness. Self-consciousness refers to knowledge about oneself. The more knowledge about the self is brought into the conscious part of a personality, the clearer one's understanding of oneself becomes. Subjective images can be recognized as perspectives and the nature of these perspectives can be somewhat explained or at least accepted. Self-consciousness leads to an inner conviction by removing any doubt about an issue. Ultimately, it leads to confidence. Managing the position switch helps in this process, since it accelerates the self-consciousness building process.

Self-confidence is strengthened through confidence in the process. Mastering the process of self-consciousness building gives self-confidence. The certainty of having a structure and guideline that can be used to progress from shocking and humiliating moments to a situation of clarity and power is comforting. What is experienced in life can be attributed to stages and impulses of the *Awakening Conscience Model* and situations can be managed more consciously. The shock moment can be recognized as being part of the process that allows the use of creative power effectively. The process of healing from the humility and the pain of a shock can be accelerated and power and motivation can be gained from the experience of passing the test. Every time a spectator becomes aware of a previous state in the process, she is ready to move to the next.

It is a feeling of relief to go through the process. The fear of failing and needing to hide what is inside as well as a fear of exposure are reduced. There is a shift in point of view towards an attitude of being grateful that issues arise and that they can provide material to work with as well as opportunities to grow. It is liberation and emancipation.

Going through the process described in *The Awakening Conscience Model* is not a singular act – every experience of going through the process enables a new level to be reached and a new round to begin again. This is the Hegelian concept of continuously developing oneself – and with it society as a whole. A recurring process of illusion and disillusionment leads to more and more refined knowledge. The process cannot stop, since as soon as something is represented, it becomes archaic, i.e., an empty form. Spectators need to continue to fill the represented forms with meaning and experience. It is each member of society's responsibility to contribute to this common knowledge of society.

I would like to have a look at Isabel Archer's image creation and negotiation process and analyze how much she learns and, by doing so, precisely discuss the question of how learning by watching another's learning process is possible – if at all – and to what extent her own illusions and realizations are a requirement for learning. There is a danger of her falling into the illusion of being exempt from the negotiations of society only because she knows Dorothea's process (or processes of characters and women of an earlier decade). The process might become archaic if it is only looked at

and not applied and thereby brings forth symbols that are not meaningful in a character's context other than Dorothea's – just like the religious symbols of a classical painting to a 19th-century realist spectator.

3 The Challenge of the Model – I Know the Experience; I am Mature

Dorothea is the heroine who brings the image of *Mariana in Mariana's room* to life. Isabel is the emanation of the woman who stands *on the threshold of Mariana's room* and the outside. Door, window, and painting frame represent such thresholds and the symbol of the threshold is omnipresent in *Portrait of a Lady*. Isabel's starting point is outside of societal structures of Europe, but inside of several illusionary views of the world. She is not locked in Mariana's room by society, but gets herself into this cage by choice, although unknowingly. Her achievement will ultimately be that she gets to the threshold again at the end, but not outside; that is to say, she learns from her decisions made with an illusionary view, but cannot relieve herself of the severe consequences of her choices.

Isabel goes through an *Awakening Conscience* process, just like Dorothea before her. The later heroine's going through the process tests the model's plausibility as well as effectiveness in two ways: First, Isabel supposedly knows of illusion-making of earlier heroines and the complexity of societal structures in Europe yet still gets caught. Second, she does not manage to draw a clearly visible *third painting*. These two readings of Isabel's development process – because the heroine does develop nevertheless – raise the question of whether it is at all possible to model a development process and think of it in terms of its applicability to other stories and, if so, how to apply it. The *Portrait of a Lady* will be analyzed in this section for *model indicators* which are *pictorial indicators* by means of which the model developed in Section 2 is evoked. The three stages are distinguishable; the Impulses are sometimes blanked out in the storyline and often intertwined with the stages. What goes on inside a character is more difficult to detect in this novel, as if to say that the complexity of seeing and recognizing others' views increases as modernity progresses. Isabel has an ambition. The degree to which and the way in which she pursues it, the model discussion with Isabel will reveal. This much can be said: gaze refinement is a requirement in her case, too.

3.1 The Middle Piece of the *Bildung-durch-Bilder*-Triptychon – the Threshold Piece

The metaphor of seeing and representing actuality is continued in the later novel. *Seeing* has turned completely into the image of *looking at paintings*. The analogy between paintings and seeing a character as an artwork is thereby taken to the next level in *Portrait of a Lady*. James's taste in art – i.e., the pictorial world in which Isabel negotiates her *Selbstbild* – reflects the threshold idea in art: still traditional, but a certain interest in modern tendencies is apparent (e.g. the spontaneous, abstract in Impressionism).

> […] James's tastes in the visual arts typified those of his adopted country and especially those of the educated high bourgeois of his day. He admired the High Renaissance and the 'grand style' in architecture. He admired too Titian, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Fra Angelico, Botticelli, Raphael, and

> Tintoretto, especially Tintoretto for his sense of light and movement and for the sense of the inner life in the outer form.[307]

> In all of James's tastes […], there is little unexpected, little out of the ordinary. […] like many Victorians and Edwardians, James favored the first generation Pre-Raphaelites […]. / Like all nineteenth-century devotees of the visual arts, James's crucial and most complex encounter came with the most radical and mutating of nineteenth-century art movements, Impressionism and its various heirs […]. […] the hallmark of Impressionist style: rapid brushstrokes to capture impressions of people and landscapes, and to 'suggest the scintillation of light and to recreate it to a certain extent on canvas [as well as] to retain rapidly changing aspects.' The Impressionists also tended to paint subjects from the lower classes in more ordinary activities than found in much earlier painting, especially that ruling in the Salon.[308]

Classical, allegorical, prestigious paintings in the 'grand style' dominate the scene of *The Portrait*. New trends at the time do not appear in the underlying real paintings, but in the way the negotiation of images is conducted, i.e., in the way spontaneous reactions and changes in appearances and/or perceptions in the beholder are expressed. Besides, the consciousness of "rapidly changing aspects" in nature and characters challenge the silent acceptance of allegorical representation.

Isabel's art orientation is exclusively towards Renaissance painting. It is not a real dealing with art, however. Renaissance art for her does not fulfill the Ruskinian (for instance) requirement of art that it touches, shakes, and moves a spectator to initiate a change in her life. In the symbolism of Renaissance paintings, she cannot express herself. And she does not challenge this form of expression and look for a different kind. Her superficial attitude towards the arts is a reflection of her inexperienced and somewhat shallow judgment of the world and her position in it. Consequently, plans she draws have minimal chance of survival. Isabel's illusion and the failure of her initial plan, as well as the fact that she will have to learn to recognize "rapidly changing aspects" and see the limitations of "grand style" representation – idealized representation, is apparent to the reader from the very beginning.

Isabel believes that she is safe from the *startlers*.[309] She knows them from representation experiences that the heroines who came before her have had. However, she does not recognize them in her world. *Startler* #1 is the constancy/reality illusion: In her perspective, she is, first of all, safe from the constancy/reality illusion because she carefully studies situations and prepares for important decisions. *Startler* #2 is the frame-within-the-frame phenomenon: Second, she is aware of being seen and watched, but ignores the fact that these views have a determining influence on her image, i.e., that her views as Mariana out of the window are always within a larger frame – that of the spectator of the Mariana scene. *Startler* #3 is the mirror that reflects back: Third, she does not recognize her fate and the challenges reflected in other charactersthat would help her see her own course and its

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[307] Torgovnick 38

[308] Torgovnick 38, 40

[309] As developed in section 1.1.2: *Startler* #1 is the constancy/reality illusion. *Startler* #2 is the frame-within-the-frame phenomenon. *Startler* #3 is the mirror that reflects back. *Startler* #4 is the *third meaning*. *Startler* #5 is the *blind spot.*

challenges until late in the novel. *Startler* #4 is the *third meaning*: Fourth, she is not on the lookout for a third meaning in situations and characters presented to her, asking the question of the background of the viewed objects and what they thus bring to a scene. *Startler* #5 is the *blind spot*: Fifth, for all these reasons she has a blind spot and realizes the necessity for her to refine her gaze and narrow down the blind spot area. Isabel has not developed her gaze nor an awareness of the importance of gaze refinement from watching other heroines' awakening conscience processes.

Isabel lacks an (art) convention discourse that she has neither learned nor been given an opportunity to have in her American upbringing. Her overall illusion is that the image making and negotiation process does not concern her. She comes from the outside and is not subject to hierarchies and conventions of the Old World – i.e., is not the Mariana object to the male views of society. She enters the scene in England with the conviction that she is free and that there is more to life than she has yet seen. She is granted an income that gives her freedom of decision and the possibility to 'see' the world. She will have to feel the world too and see that the process is about her.

> [H]owever independent [previous heroines like the Elizabeth Bennets, the Cathys, the Jane Eyres, the Becky Sharps and the Dorothea Brookes] strive to be, they have little in common with Isabel. For one thing they do not have her (American) advantages, and for another they are not allowed to indulge – as Isabel is, to an extreme degree – in [the process of reasoning].[310]

In order not to give up any of her freedom to conventions and anything known to her – that is to say, not to fall into traps like her female predecessors – Isabel avoids everything that would be an easy and predetermined path. Isabel is given a chance to reflect on her life and lot and the possibilities she has for fulfilment. Isabel is granted the freedom to reflect which Dorothea before her did not have. Isabel does not transform her reflection into clear viewing, however. Isabel's ambition to improve does not become clear to the reader. At the beginning of her development cycle of which the reader is witness, Isabel rather has an ambition to reason as much as she can. She simply wants to avoid conventions, not improve them.

There are three identifiable thinking poses that show her reflecting on her marriage choices, i.e., a topic by means of which women's freedom and autonomy is often discussed at the time of the novel, but Isabel's discussion of it does not yield change: 1) reading – or pondering with a book in her hand – when her aunt enters the Albany house[311], 2) before Lord Warburton seeks her in the garden for his proposal[312], 3) before she meets Goodwood one last time at the same spot as Warburton

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[310] Moore 16

[311] Cf. *PL* 76: "this young lady […] seated alone with a book. To say she was so occupied is to say that her solitude did not press upon her; for her love of knowledge had a fertilizing quality and her imagination was strong."

[312] Cf. *PL* 153-54:

> It seemed to her at last that she would do well to take a book; formerly when heavy-hearted, she had been able, with the help of a well-chosen volume, to transfer the seat of consciousness to the organ of pure reason. Of late, it was not to be denied, literature had seemed a fading light, and even after she had reminded herself that her uncle's library was provided with a complete set of those authors which no gentleman's collection should be

before and just before she decides to go back to Rome.[313] All three poses circle around the questions of whether to marry the American industrial Goodwood which would be her expected path, the perfect match of the New World, and for which she would not have had to come to Europe to expand her horizon; whether to marry Lord Warburton, old money and high prestige, the perfect match of the Old World; or whether to marry at all, and if marriage can ever fit into her plan to have her own life and decisions.[314] The three poses will be analyzed in this section for they show Isabel's step from books and fantasies to living and being confronted with real people, to re-reading these scenes, and to experience. The thinking pose resembles Mariana's absorbed air and is strongly reminiscent of her being in Mariana's room. At the starting point of her life journey, Isabel has many ideas and much she wants to achieve. She is convinced that there is more to life than the obvious (marriage, for example) and wants to find it; she becomes victim to the illusion that by avoiding decisions that others have made before her, she can maintain her freedom.

Gaze refinement, which equals actively going into an interaction with other characters, for her is even more crucial than for earlier heroines because the number of gazes of other characters has multiplied from Dorothea's time to hers and, if not actively managed, they have a greater and more restrictive effect. Closeness, immediacy, and thereby a real concern are key factors. No independent choices are possible. All decisions depend on how well a negotiation with other characters is conducted on the specific matter. Seeing and understanding others and her role becomes a huge challenge in modernism. Reading is difficult and the frame of reference not clear in modernist times. Conventions no longer give any orientation whatsoever, not even as a frame that is to be broken open in order to express oneself, since existing conventions are shifting and individual viewing is becoming stronger, all of which creates an illusion that conventional and curtailing viewing does not exist anymore. Each other-image of herself is, in fact, conventional and curtailing viewing – a perspective that represents what is known and cannot include what Isabel wants to change. Consequently, each self-image is very much negotiated in a modern context.

> without, she sat motionless and empty-handed, her eyes bent on the cool green turf of the lawn. Her meditations were presently interrupted by the arrival of a servant who handed her a letter [Goodwood's]. […] Isabel read this missive with such deep attention that she had not perceived an approaching tread on the soft grass. Looking up, however, as she mechanically folded it she saw Lord Warburton standing before her.

[313] Cf. *PL* 630: "Her attitude had a singular absence of purpose; her hands, handing at her sides, lost themselves in the folds of her black dress; her eyes gazed vaguely before her. […] How long she had sat in this position she could not have told you […]."

[314] Cf. Pippin *Henry James* 126-27

Referring to the difficult task of self-definition in modernity, Pippin claims that

> [t]he extraordinary complexity of social reality, or the link between the content of any self-perception and the experience of being-perceived, together with the range and complexities of material dependencies in modernity, might seem to threaten to dissolve the integrity of any self into its social constitution. Always to internalize the views of others, to think of oneself as nothing more than the accumulation of such views, or to be so materially dependent on others that one's deeds and passions (even love itself) can never be experienced as one's own, but just 'theirs', 'what they require', is not to have satisfied the first condition of my life's having worth; that it be, and be experienceable as, my life.[315]

Isabel makes the experience that the negotiation of images in general and of her self-image is harsh. As if voicing Hegel/Pippin, Osmond claims about Mme Merle: "[…] yourself includes so many other selves – so much of every one else and of everything. I never knew a person whose life touched so many other lives."[316] As Dorothea must also experience, the independent choice of one's own representation is not possible, since one's appearance depends on society's reception of one's own image.

The more modern the heroines' behavior, the more opposition from society in the form of image negotiation they face – a fact Isabel does not realize until late. Her very modern friend Henrietta Stackpole knows that Isabel is not aware of what she gets involved with through her behavior – a fear Henrietta expresses when asking her friend: "Do you know where you are going, Isabel Archer?"[317] Precisely because of the two characters of Mme Merle and Osmond, Isabel is in this even more challenged than Dorothea because Isabel does not only need to learn about the existence of other perspectives and the severity of conventions, but is intentionally deceived (by Mme Merle and Gilbert Osmond). Even the narrator of *The Portrait* admits: "It would certainly have been hard to see what injury could arise to [Isabel] from the visit she presently paid to Mr Osmond's hill-top."[318] Intentional deception poses an increased challenge compared to *Middlemarch* where the nature of the fragmented gaze presented the only form of deception.

The narrative is structured as to exemplify that all appearance is determined by inner images, not yet externalized, and how they not only influence, but entirely create scenes. This narrative technique hints at the fact that *startlers* knowledge is part of common knowledge and of a "collective imagination,"[319] but that the transfer to herself, to her own images, has to be done and that it is this step that the model is about. The Hegelian knowledge-building process in cycles is represented narratively – assuming that Isabel's making sense of the *Awakening Conscience* scene takes place in various steps and is never entirely completed.

Isabel's story can be read as a modernist approach to the *Awakening Conscience Model*. In her world, it is even harder to orient herself and determine her *Selbstbild*. Modernist complexity

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[315] Pippin *Henry James* 126-27

[316] *PL* 289

[317] *PL* 219

[318] *PL* 304

[319] Cf. Pippin *Henry James* 159

consists of multiperspectiveness, a time complication, and an even more closely woven and entangling web than in Dorothea's times. Traces of these modernist elements – multiperspectiveness which equals individualism and the time dimension which stands for the rendering of justice to changes in time and the consciousness of the difference in appearance depending on the time of appearance – are reinforced in *The Portrait of a Lady* and also visualized in the analysis of the three stages for Isabel. The increased complexity comes out in the three stages of the model and with it in the *Mariana* and the *Awakening Conscience* scenes in *The Portrait of a Lady*. These two crucial milestones in Dorothea's process also appear in the later novel which calls forth a study of the *Awakening Conscience Model* and the way the model is applied in *The Portrait of a Lady.* The scenes that allow me to make a reference to the two paintings do not evoke the real paintings in as much as they evoke the main themes developed in the discussion of the model: a woman in front of a frame with no own gaze (distilled from *Mariana*) and a husband's intimate relationship with another woman and the relationship of the two with the spectator of the scene (as taken from *The Awakening Conscience*). Assumingly, the essence of the two paintings is taken and given a variety of forms in this novel. Topics of the two paintings and with it elements of the entire *Awakening Conscience Model* have become *pictorial indicators* for the analysis of Isabel's development process. Whenever such a *pictorial indicator* appears, the question of where Isabel stands can be asked. This reading of *The Portrait of a Lady* gives order and understanding in a narrative that often disrupts the chronological order of events.

Modernist, experimental art serves as an illustration and a metaphor of the chaos that individual viewing and interaction produces – not as help to read the chaos – and the two Pre-Raphaelite underlying real paintings are furnished with modernist characteristics in the evoked versions, such as multiperspective, space, time, and change aspects, precisely to underline this chaos and to double Isabel's difficulty in finding orientation. This looking for orientation is reflected in us as the readers who are looking for *pictorial indicators* of the two Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the novel. A general characteristic of Modern art can be that of attempting to leave traditions behind and indulge in a sense of experimentation with represented objects and painting material.[320] Isabel cannot appropriate modernist art knowledge or any expertise on art, for that matter, to help her develop an instrument to express herself. Modernist art is not a means by which to negotiate the chaos of image creation. Just like in *Middlemarch*, although other art tendencies are introduced, the female characters will first have to learn how to read classical, allegorical paintings – these are, after all, the forms that their husbands suggest for them and the ones they themselves idealize. New tendencies raise their awareness of the challenge of visuality and representation and help them do so – only at the end of a development cycle.

In this analysis of Isabel, I will show that the consciousness of how the development process works is crucial. Self-consciousness is only built when the *Awakening Conscience* process is understood. This claim is based on Pippin's and Hegel's idea that: "Self-consciousness […] only exists

[320] Cf. Gombrich 1958, 419

as recognized." [321] The process is not to be thought as a guideline to avoid confrontation, but as a reminder of how to do something with it. It can be said that "[r]eality itself, modern social reality, had, in Hegel's famous phrase, become 'rational', could only sustain and reproduce itself in a new way, by appeal to rational legitimacy and so to the capacities for free agency presupposed in such appeals."[322] "The self is entitled to treatment as a free subject,"[323] and "individual vision" that equals "individual will" is granted to the human being in this new society.[324] The modern individual begins to realize her own desires and have her own opinions about the world. Insofar as all individuals have their own views, however, each human being is again limited. Each individual's freedom ends where the other one's begins. Idealism for Isabel is the intellectually active and recognized woman. But what should her reasoning, her intellectual activity, be about? Fantasies? No, it should be about how one learns from interaction and what to do with this precious gift called experience. Humbling moments of experience, which leads to learning, always come retrospectively and always too late for the characters to avoid confrontation.[325]

This raises the question of whether experience can be passed on. Isabel, who supposedly knew Dorothea's process and starts from outside the conventions Dorothea felt, ends up in Osmond's frame and the cage of conventions. Can Isabel pass on what she has learnt from her illusions to Pansy and prevent Pansy from staying forever in Mariana's room? Passing on experience does not mean merely copying the process and the decisions made, but assisting in how to cope with the step from idealism to realism. What others have learned is always already archaic and symbolic and no longer realist. A model is also a kind of an image, a visualization. It cannot just be looked at, but needs to be understood, transferred, and completed. Learning and development only happens when the process is felt, emotions emerge, and the body's frame tingles – when one's previous illusions are eliminated one by one. Pippin's summary of James's moral ideal in *The Portrait of a Lady* sums up this introduction to the Isabel chapter:

> Die aesthetische Formulierung seines moralischen Ideals: sieh, soviel du kannst, fühle soviel wie gefühlt werden kann, lass deine Einbildungskraft intensiv wirken, schätze die überwältigende Komplexität deiner eigenen Besonderheit und der anderer richtig ein und erkenne sie an.[326]

His words about a heroine whose driving forces are worth studying will lead us to Lily of *To the Lighthouse* in Section 4 who will be granted the full power of creativity. I see Isabel as remaining on the threshold between learning for herself and trying to raise awareness of the danger of failing to recognize that individual learning and initiative creativity is the key – not to freedom, because complete freedom is not possible – but to autonomy.

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[321] Pippin *Hegel on Self-Consciousness* 38

[322] Pippin *Idealism* 6

[323] Pippin *Henry James* 3

[324] *PL* 45-46

[325] Cf. Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 159

[326] Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 145

3.2 A Modernist Approach to the *Awakening Conscience Model*

The three stages of the modeled development process are studied with the goal of showing how an appropriation of the model works. Compared to the initial version of the model, as I will argue, some characteristics have changed in the appearance of the stages in this later novel – not however, in their sense for the development process. The Mariana stage is still the stage of the illusionistic gaze; the Awakening Conscience moment the moment when gaze refinement is initiated, and the third stage the stage when a mature decision is recognizable made based on the gained experience in this consciousness gain cycle. In terms of appearance, the changes are the following: 1) The Mariana stage is characterized by the multiple stakeholders in the establishing of the Mariana pose of Isabel, the potential negotiations about her self-image she could have with all of them, and how she misses those chances. Moreover, for the *Portrait of a Lady*, the Mariana stage is possible for various characters. Those studied are Isabel, Mme Merle, and Pansy, with Isabel both as Mariana object and spectator. A further layer of spectatorship of the Mariana stage is added: Isabel can potentially see the process (and danger) of establishing the Mariana pose. 2) In the Awakening Conscience stage, it takes various confrontations for Isabel to have the eye-opening effect. She has confrontations with every character with whom she could have had negotiations in the creation of her Mariana stage. 3) In Stage 3, it is not known what Isabel's *third painting* looks like exactly. Scattered indications of her views out of windows need to be brought together by the reader in order to form an idea of what she sees that helps her make a mature decision. This complexity in shaping a clear image can be considered a *mise-en-abyme* of Isabel's struggle for clarity in viewing within the complexity of her woven reality. Let us see how the model helps in giving a guideline to reading and, especially, re-reading and learning from situations and confrontations.

3.2.1 Stage 1 – Multiplying and Fragmenting of the Mariana Stage

The Mariana painting is treated as a *pictorial indicator* in this sub-section. Whenever an element appears from the reading of this painting as made in section 2.2.1.2, the Mariana stage (=Stage 1) is evoked. This method allows for an examination of the female characters' behavior, decisions, and images in terms of their development stage and corresponding capability of perception. An underlying structure, just like underlying real paintings, brings in all that can be discussed in connection with the underlying element. At the same time, it allows for an analysis of spectator reaction and behavior to this element. In other words, Isabel is analyzed both as painted object and as spectator of the Mariana scene.

The elements that count as *pictorial indicators* of the Mariana Stage are numerous: A female character is in the Mariana pose or lives a Mariana moment when she is seen in front of a frame (window or painting) from behind or the side. Moreover, the female character qualifies as a Mariana object when she indulges in or has paused an artistic activity. Of course, a praying pose also evokes *Mariana*, since her standing in front of the triptych on the window is a reflection of how someone could be potentially praying in front of the household altar at the back of the room, which also supports a

religious triptych. Scenes in the novel that show a woman in a room secluded from the world also refer to Mariana's room. Mariana's room stands for the fact that a character's images are always perceived within a frame of an overall spectator and that her images are always a negotiation with the overall spectators – whether she is conscious of this fact or not. By means of Mariana's three layers, the whole potential of meaning that a spectator has in the actuality she perceives is illustrated.

The three layers are the religious painting on the window, the nature scene behind it, and her inner image. The religious painting stands for any kind of classical, allegorical, or conventional representation that has a freezing and curtailing effect. The nature scene is the spectator's immediate surrounding that holds the truths of the complexity of the web of society, and which can be a landscape painting in general, standing for motion, lighting, the spontaneous, and a time reference in representation. The inner image signifies her illusions and impractical expectations. This illustration of a multi-layered reality also announces the process of negotiation and a final harmonization of these three layers which is only possible once the inner images are externalized, which in turn stands for becoming conscious. The negotiation between the images in Mariana's field of vision and that of the overall spectator represent the negotiation of her *Selbstbild* with the image others have of her. This way of looking at it is possible because both images, that of Mariana from outside and that which Mariana sees herself, are *Selbstbilder* of the female character (Mariana's image is strongly influenced by her not yet externalized inner image so that all she sees is a reflection of how she sees herself). The possible negotiation Mariana can have between the images provided by her three layers represent the negotiation of her *Selbstbild* – of the way she wants to see things and herself – over time and her different development stages. Being able to harmonize them is the goal because this means that her ideals, the circumstances and feasibility and reception of her plans, as well as her experience, are all included in her *third painting* – the one produced by her mature gaze.

The Mariana pose equals a passive state. It is the state that was still expected of women in Isabel's time. Her cousin Ralph characterizes the passive state as the preferred state of women which stands in contrast with how he judges Isabel:

> [Isabel] was intelligent and generous; it was a fine free nature; but what was she going to do with herself? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask it. Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited, in attitudes more or less passive, for a man to come that way and furnish them with a destiny. Isabel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intentions of her own.[327]

The Mariana figure does not take a look outside at nature nor looks out onto the avenue (this image is taken from Dorothea's layer of the nature picture). Accordingly, these can only be perceived as Mariana objects and not as spectators on their own. The according representation of a passive woman is associated with classical beauty – an allegorical symbol. The limiting quality of the frame is compared to the limiting of the surface of such a symbol, such a form, such a shape. The study of the painting tendencies in this analysis of the *Portrait of a Lady* is made to detect which tendency is used for the idealized, archaic, and prestigious layer and which for the realist and clear-cut representation.

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[327] *PL* 116

The visualization of the Mariana pose for Isabel is the 'portrait of a lady' according to the title of the novel, first seen by Ned Rosier (Pansy's suitor) as the 'portrait of a gracious lady.' Isabel presents herself to the young man's view, framed in a deep doorway and composing "the picture of a gracious lady:"[328] "[s]he was dressed in black velvet; she looked high and splendid, as he had said, and yet so radiantly gentle!"[329] It is, in fact, a representation of a curtailing form and the layer of the allegorical painting.

> The years had touched her only to enrich her; the flower of her youth had not faded, it only hung more quietly on its stem. She had lost something of that quick eagerness to which her husband had privately taken exception – she had more the air of being able to wait. Now at all events, framed in the gilded doorway, she struck our young man as the picture of a gracious lady.[330]

Analogously to the team effort that is the construction of Isabel's Mariana pose, all characters contribute to the creation of the 'portrait of a gracious lady' of Isabel which I will consider the climax of the Mariana poses. All characters watch and thus co-create the transformation of the 'spontaneous young woman from Albany' into the 'portrait of a lady.' The *startler* of multiperspectiveness is naturally applied to by all. Nevertheless, I consider the portrait of Isabel as Osmond's masterpiece. Isabel is different: everyone notices that, including herself. However, no one offers a form to capture her original nature. Consequently, Osmond gives her one and she is made to fit the norms.

Various spectators and Isabel's lack of an outlook on the avenue out of the Mariana window fail to produce a frame for Isabel that gives her flexibility and autonomy. Those characters' views, as well as Isabel's reaction to each of those characters – which are only potential negotiations, will be analyzed in this sub-section. My argument is that Isabel is unable to benefit from these potential negotiations so that she could protect herself from stepping into Osmond's trap. I call these potential negotiations, since they all fail to a certain degree. All characters cannot adequately represent Isabel's inner life, for various different reasons, including Isabel herself. As a consequence, her inner life remains unrecognized and lays the ground for a husband like Osmond who is only concerned with form and knows exactly which form he wants for Isabel. Isabel is very eager to live her own ways so that she refuses other ways (and with it to look at other images) on principle. I do not call the interactions between Isabel and other characters failed negotiations, however, because Isabel will remember and be able to make use of things she discussed and ideas she uttered with a number of co-characters once her consciousness is elaborated with an *Awakening Conscience* scene similar to the one Dorothea had. It is, therefore, worth examining the untapped knowledge in the heroine's exchanges with her Aunt Lydia, Ralph, Warburton, and Goodwood before moving on to a possible explanation of why Osmond could possibly fascinate the young American.

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[328] *PL* 418

[329] *PL* 418

[330] *PL* 418

3.2.1.1 Aunt Lydia's and Isabel's Contribution to the Portrait of the Heroine

Aunt Lydia is, chronologically speaking, the first to see the young girl in Mariana's room. An imaginary painting shows the meeting of both women as the indoor scene at Albany, Isabel's hometown, reflecting the impulse of Isabel's new life which she will begin in England. Aunt Lydia's standing in the doorway symbolizes her standing on the threshold of the two worlds – physically speaking the outside world and Isabel's world and, metaphorically speaking, Isabel's present life in America and her future life in Europe. The Albany house is in decay and marks the ending of a period in her life, which is exemplified by the house's neglected appearance. Accordingly, the house is to be sold and Isabel is to leave for Europe. There are parallels between Aunt Lydia and her niece. As we learn, "Mrs. Touchett had once been like Isabel."[331] Having much more experience than the young girl up to this time secluded from the world, she recognizes that Isabel, free as she might consider herself, needs to see the real world first. She does not take seriously the ideas that her mind at this stage of maturity are likely to produce.

The first hypothetical painting of Isabel as a Mariana object is created in Albany when Aunt Lydia sees "this young lady […] seated alone with a book. To say she was so occupied is to say that her solitude did not press upon her; for her love of knowledge had a fertilizing quality and her imagination was strong."[332] Isabel is found by her aunt in the darkest and most disordered room of the house, which seems to prohibit any exterior influence. This scene qualifies as a Mariana scene, since there is exclusion from the outside and Isabel's inner images are all she sees. The barred windows of Mariana's room have turned into closed windows and shutters for the purpose of emphasizing the young girl's disinterest in the immediate world around her – the realist painting in Mariana's field of vision – and that she would much rather wait for a romantic hero to sweep her off her feet.

The static pose of her reading belies a very agitated inner life. Isabel's appearance incorporates movement and immobility at the same time. She has built up fantasies that she has no wish to be disturbed by the real outside world. The windows and shutters are closed for this reason. Isabel is shown as a prisoner of her quixotic ideas and heroic expectations.[333] She has chosen to be imprisoned, since she senses this prison as freedom. Her imagination is capable of taking her anywhere despite the fact that in reality she is chained to the house. As a result, she at first feels disturbed by her aunt's appearance in Albany. Her visitor is to her more like an "intruder."[334] Her aunt intrudes her world so that the hypothetical painting of the lady who is occupying the doorway does not immediately signify a promising future to the girl. However, in the course of her aunt's visit and upon mentioning her interest in taking Isabel with her, it becomes evident that the initially bothersome picture of her aunt transforms into the materialization of Isabel's innermost desire "to leave the past

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[331] *PL* 108

[332] *PL* 76

[333] "Isabel wird als Gefangene ihrer phantastischen Vorstellungen und heroischen Ansprüche gezeigt." (Brosch 106)

[334] *PL* 79

behind her and, as she said to herself, to begin afresh."[335] All her aunt sees is a neglected young orphaned woman of whom she feels obliged to take care as a close relative. She absolutely misses the developed intellect that Isabel is very sure of and strongly cultivates by her reading. Her pragmatic approach supports her observation that Isabel has fantasies, and not firmly developed ideas. As the neutral, realist character she is, she is not interested in Isabel's fantasy and wants to show her the real world.

Her aunt's hypothetical painting in Isabel's room at the Albany house enables the identification of the girl's three Mariana views, which she has unknowingly and which her aunt blanks out through disinterest. Isabel could look out of the window, but chooses to keep her eye on a book. She focuses on her mental view, her inner images created and nourished by her reading. In that, her pose very much resembles Mariana's pensive pose. Isabel's focus lies on her inner images to such a degree that the window with the history painting on it and the realist painting behind it does not even appear. It is blanked out by Isabel, completely omitted, and in line with this, is not visible to the reader. Her aunt's intrusion, however, widens the young woman's angle. Aunt Lydia awakens Isabel's interest in the world that lies beyond her room. When Isabel comes to England and sees Gardencourt, which forms the background of her story and of the hypothetical paintings she offers at her arrival, it becomes clear that what she sees then is the supposed look out of her Mariana room onto a nature scene. She could have a proper look, but clings to her bookish view.

The enchanting Gardencourt painting Isabel witnesses when first coming to England shows a visual product Isabel is able to bring forth at the beginning of her development process. I am convinced that what she sees when entering the lawn of Gardencourt is nothing other than an image deeply influenced by her *unexternalized inner image* – the uncontrollably altered nature picture in Mariana's potential field of vision. Since Isabel is in the Mariana stage, she does not yet recognize her ideas and expectations. These inner images have not yet been externalized because she has not yet reached the *Awakening Conscience* stage. I suggest a reading of the first Gardencourt scene as a manifestation of Isabel's ideas and expectations. Understanding this scene as a visualization of what must be going on inside the young American allows the reader to follow the process of how inner images influence the seen.

The Gardencourt scene is the product of Isabel's gaze in her Mariana stage. Isabel clearly shows the tendency to create fairy tales of her life. Locked up and left by herself in the house in Albany, she has developed an interior life that by far exceeds the activity of her everyday life. For instance, Isabel has "established relations almost human, certainly dramatic"[336] with the old pieces of furniture in her favorite room. Understandably enough, she is enchanted by the sight that is granted to her when she arrives at Gardencourt. The "beautiful scene"[337] and the presence of gentlemen and lords at leisure enhance her imagination. Isabel's "eye that denoted clear perception" [338] proves the

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[335] *PL* 86

[336] *PL* 78

[337] *PL* 70

[338] *PL* 70

contrary, i.e., it merely composes an idealized image. Her knowledge of Europe is gathered from books. Her experience of European life is deduced from what her fictional characters have experienced. Her expectations of her life in Europe are very high.

The enchanting painting in question is shown in the following, where Isabel witnesses the scene from a threshold and as if through a frame of the door that opens to the garden. She sees

> [...] an admirable setting to an innocent pastime. The implements of the little feast had been disposed upon the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon. Part of the afternoon has waned, but much of it was left, and what was left was of the finest and rarest quality. Real dusk would not arrive for many hours; but the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf. They lengthened slowly, however, and the scene expressed that sense of leisure still to come which is perhaps the chief source of one's enjoyment of such a scene at such an hour. […] The persons concerned in it were taking their pleasure quietly, and they were not of the sex which is supposed to furnish the regular votaries of the ceremony I have mentioned. The shadows on the perfect lawn were straight and angular; they were the shadows of an old man sitting in a deep wicker-chair near the low table on which the tea had been served, and of two younger men strolling to and fro, in desultory talk, in front of him.[339]

Her appearance in the door frame is a mirroring of her aunt's appearance in Albany and is equally surprising to the onlookers as to Isabel when she saw her aunt. But for now let us focus on what Isabel sees to understand how Isabel forms her opinions at this stage of her development and why her aunt does not pay any attention to these girlish views. Isabel discerns the "shadows" of European life and the "shadows" of the three characters that populate her first scene of European life – the "shadows," not the essence. Three characters – her uncle Mr. Touchett, her cousin Ralph and Lord Warburton, a neighbor – have their afternoon tea in the garden of Mr. Touchett's estate. In the stillness of this scene, an overview of societal structures is conveyed. Similar to the waning summer afternoon, the era represented by the three men, who are the subjects against the background of the garden and the house in this first picture, is on the verge of decay. Mr. Touchett is an old man; Ralph is sick; and Lord Warburton is of a class that has lost its former glory. Isabel, however, feels that the "perfect lawn"[340] of the English house, described as the carpet of a living room, guarantees privacy and shelters the inhabitants from the outside world – and from modern society. The characters are described in the same way as the house itself, namely by a reference to their faces that insinuates the façade of the house. Lord Warburton's face is "as English as that of an old gentleman,"[341] handsome and with rich adornments and Ralph has "an ugly, sickly, witty, charming face, furnished, but by no means decorated."[342] She is interested in the image of a rich inner life that Ralph's sickly face promises. She is not, however, interested in the inner life of Lord Warburton, who to her only exists in terms of his being a lord. She, in fact, does not look at Lord Warburton closely and does not even

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[339] *PL* 59

[340] *PL* 59

[341] *PL* 61

[342] *PL* 62

greet him. She knows him well enough by knowing what he represents. She makes him the symbol of English nobility and tradition of her portrait in the style of an allegorical painting. Gardencourt with its inhabitants presents itself in all its splendor. It is composed of solid brick and shows traces of many decades and thus offers a "rich [...] front,"[343] which thereby complies with Isabel's expectations of traditional Europe. Isabel does not see any rigidity in traditional English life. On the contrary, the image she has is a promise of a fruitful future to her. The popular image of the promising New World and the decaying Old World is reversed by Isabel and her view. She has the ambitions of a modern woman and is convinced that for further development she needs to know the origins from where such a modern life as Americans are all allowed to lead emerged.

Isabel would expect women in this hypothetical painting to "furnish" the scene. In this scene, she would have appreciated a decorative quality beside the "straight and angular" sex. This stands very much in contrast with what she admires in women like her aunt. Aunt Lydia conveys the taste of the wide world that until then Isabel has only heard of. Similarly, her mentioning Florence and the old palace that she can call her own renders a whole new dimension to Isabel's ideal picture of the Old World. In fact, Italy "stretched before her like a land of promise, a land in which the love of the beautiful might be comforted by endless knowledge."[344] In this manner, she will "become a Rome-lover; that was a foregone conclusion."[345] Moreover, Aunt Lydia not only mobilizes Isabel's fantasy, but brings the so far only imagined sights within the girl's reach. Isabel's dreams of Europe and her romantic stories all of a sudden concern herself and her future. Knowing this, it is not surprising that Isabel finds her husband precisely in Florence at her aunt's manor. One could assume that she already fell in love with Osmond the moment her aunt steps into her room at the house in Albany.

By Isabel's inactivity in connection with the shaping of her *Selbstbild*, she contributes to Osmond's 'portrait of a lady.' Isabel contrasts her many ideas and theories about life in general and her life in particular with those of her aunt, viewing them as well-developed and superior and certain that she can make other characters see and appreciate them. In fact, Isabel has higher ambitions than those which her aunt achieved, according to her. Her aunt has certainly kept her independence, but Isabel misses the essence and meaning in her aunt's life and regards her marriage as a failure because it does not bring her happiness.

> Der familiäre Kontext insgesamt, der weitere Rahmen für diesen Teil der Szenerie, ist, wie wir bald erfahren, eine kalte, lieblose, gescheiterte Ehe zwischen Mr. Und Mrs. Touchett. Beide haben nichts an Substanz geschaffen, weder er mit seinem Geldverdienen (er ist Bankier) noch sie mit ihrer „Unabhängigkeit", weder moralisch noch in anderer Form, nichts, was sie Ralph weitergeben können, der, wie so viele andere moderne Charaktere, krank zu sein und zu sterben scheint, weil es nicht viel gibt, wofür er leben soll.[346]

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[343] *PL* 60

[344] *PL* 275

[345] *PL* 332

[346] Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 146

Isabel wants to create substance and has a plan, an ambition. She intends to determine her life on her own. She wants to be free, which for her means to be always able to make independent decisions. The "spontaneous young woman from Albany"[347] wants to take charge of her life. Isabel wants to be active and exist and be perceived as an individual. Her modern attitude is expressed in her statement that it "would be almost immoral not to work out" an "irritating problem."[348] She wants to control the expression of herself for which she gives the following explanation: "I'm not in my first youth – I can do what I choose – I belong quite to the independent class. I've neither father nor mother; I'm poor and of a serious disposition; I'm not pretty. I therefore am not bound to be timid and conventional; indeed I can't afford such luxuries. […] Besides, I try to judge things for myself."[349]

With her aspiration to independence, she clearly shows that she does not want to be conventional. She claims that she is "not in the least stupidly conventional" (111) and understands that there's no freedom or fulfillment in being conventional.[350] In her mind (inner image) she characterizes the world and behavior of the Dorotheas before her as conventional as well as the life her sisters have, which is very similar to those she knows out of novels (and which she would also have if she agreed to marry Caspar Goodwood, an American entrepreneur). Isabel is certain that she knows Dorothea's world and convinced she cannot get as entangled in the social web as the Dorotheas did.

The way in which she was brought up contrasts with modern independence strategies. In fact, she was brought up in a completely conventional manner:

> She had everything a girl could have: kindness, admiration, bonbons, bouquets, the sense of exclusion from none of privileges from the world she lived in, abundant opportunity for dancing, plenty of new dresses, the London *Spectator*, the latest publications, the music of Gounod, the poetry of Browning, the prose of George Eliot.[351]

Isabel read all the classics "in translations"[352] and "had seen little of the evil of the world."[353] Reading novels has not developed her or prepared her in any way for Europe. She will have to make her own image negotiations and experience.

Isabel obviously does not understood Eliot's prose as a reforming and modern novel. Her fascination with the Old World is of an idealizing kind and makes her vulnerable to being exactly like women in Dorothea's time. The way Isabel enjoys the coach rides through the English countryside illustrates this. It is, for example, when Ralph and Isabel

> […] drove over the country in a Phaeton – a low, capacious, thick-wheeled phaeton formerly much used by Mr. Touchett, but which he had now ceased to enjoy. Isabel enjoyed it largely and, handling the reins in a manner which approved itself …to the groom as 'knowing', was never weary of driving her

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[347] *PL* 115

[348] *PL* 142

[349] *PL* 214

[350] Pippin *Henry James* 133

[351] *PL* 89

[352] *PL* 103

[353] *PL* 105

> uncle's capital horse through winding lanes and byways full of the rural incidents she had confidently expected to find; past cottages thatched and timbered, past ale-houses latticed and sanded, past patches of ancient common and glimpses of empty parks, between hedgerows made thick by midsummer.[354]

Isabel is enchanted by Dorothea's countryside. The country for her does not embody the reality of rural life with all its problems, such as the poverty of the peasants whom Dorothea saw and who were a driving force behind her striving for an ideal. In Isabel's case, these trips bear the characteristics of entertainment. Much of what Isabel goes to see in Europe and around the world seems to be for the sake of "staring and wondering,"[355] not for any true and humble moral development nor an inexorable pursuit of her high ideal to be a free and independent modern being.

Isabel also wishes to be liked and respected. Along with her plans to see the world, she also communicates her expectation of how the British should treat her:

> 'I've no doubt they are very good people.' Isabel rejoined; 'but are they pleasant in society? They won't rob me nor beat me; but will they make themselves agreeable to me? That's what I like people to do. I don't hesitate to say so, because I always appreciate it. I don't believe that they're very nice to girls; they're not nice to them in the novels.[356]

This is a very naïve sounding and poorly understood expectation. Her proposition could imply that she has a clear idea of how she wants to come across and that she should be treated with respect, but only a little later we learn that she is uncertain about and very concerned with her effect on others: "Isabel's chief dread in life at this period of her development was that she should appear narrow-minded; what she feared next afterwards was that she should really be so."[357] She does not see her travels to Europe as an opportunity to actively produce an effect or an impression, by means of her behavior rather than her reasoning.

Isabel feels outside of the image-negotiation that we established as natural component of modern moral life – a life in the web of society – and as a prerequisite of moral development. She thinks she is the overall spectator, but will prove to be a Mariana object just as much as Dorothea was. Isabel's views are also Mariana views, i.e., views that are always in the frame of an overall spectator of the Mariana scene and object. Before coming to Europe, she had no real interaction; the interaction with her books and her own ideas does not count. Other views are necessary. Being modern does not mean being outside of the negotiation; it means knowing that everybody is a part of the negotiation and behaving accordingly. She is not outside of negotiation, since it is impossible to be, and will have to learn how to conduct such negotiations.

Her starting point in Europe is on the threshold. Her appearances on threshold in door frames will show her development steps. At this point of the novel, she is the lively girl from Albany. This initial threshold image is the first impression of Isabel the reader gets. The sketching of Isabel as

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[354] *PL* 117

[355] *PL* 89

[356] *PL* 110

[357] *PL* 114

Mariana and locked up in Mariana's room, which in fact happens before her entrance into England, is only provided later on. Without the background information that Aunt Lydia gets out of her, we as readers would probably expect Isabel to be able to be accepted in Europe as the young and dynamic person she wants to be perceived as. This storyline teaches the reader one thing right at the start: it is essential to carefully study images and to read the background of spectator and object.

3.2.1.2 Ralph's and Isabel's Contribution to the Portrait of the Heroine

Ralph does try to find out what is going on in Isabel's head and notices that she is different. But not even Ralph, who sees that Isabel does not fit any existing forms and fixed conventions, and who is very interested in her and what a woman who refuses Lord Warburton will do in life, can offer an alternative to allegorical representation. He has no forms, no language, nor life experience that enable him to describe this impressive creature. He sees her at the Gardencourt galleries in front of paintings which gives him the opportunity to study the difference between a living and a painted object.

> She asked Ralph to show her the pictures; there was a great many in the house, most of them of his own choosing. The best were arranged in an oaken gallery, of charming proportions, which had a sitting-room at either end of it and which in the evening was usually lighted. The light was insufficient to show the pictures to advantage, and the visit might have stood over to the morrow. […] 'If you please I should like to see them just a little.' She was eager, she knew she was eager and now seemed so; she couldn't help it. […] the light was imperfect […]. It fell upon the vague squares of rich colour and on the faced gilding of heavy frames; it made a sheen on the polished floor of the gallery. Ralph took a candlestick and moved about, pointing out the things he liked; Isabel, inclining to one picture after another, indulged in little exclamations and murmurs. She was evidently a judge; he was struck with that. She took a candlestick herself and held it slowly here and there; she lifted it high and as she did so he found himself pausing in the middle of a place and bending his eyes much less upon the pictures than on her presence. He lost nothing, in truth, by these wandering glances, for she was better worth looking at than most works of art. She was undeniably spare, and ponderably light, and proveably tall; when people had wished to distinguish her from the other two Miss Archers they had called her the willowy one. Her hair, which was dark even to blackness, had been an object of envy to many women; her light grey eyes, a little too firm perhaps in her graver moments, had an enchanting range of concessions.[358]

She asks to be in the Mariana scene, but does not completely assume the pose since she is described as leaning in instead of leaning backwards. Leaning in shows interest, however it is an interest not in what is truly represented but in what this means to her. The insufficient lighting emphasizes an insufficiently attentive and developed gaze due to a lack of consciousness and clear-sightedness. Her inner image hinders her from seeing and understanding the precious paintings in a way which reveals their intended message – the challenges and problems to which these paintings could provide an answer. The dim light appears like a layer in front of her eyes that causes partial and fragmented viewing. Isabel is labelled a "judge" of paintings unlike Dorothea. However, Isabel is not a careful spectator and Ralph detects a "natural taste" and a "fine free nature"; she "strike[s] [him] as different

[358] *PL* 99-100

from most girls."[359] But he has no concept that he can apply to her. He just wants to see what happens and what she does with her life.

For the lack of a concept, he uses classical beauty terminology and images when he thinks and tries to make sense of her. He acknowledges she is more than that, but what is she? Isabel is an artwork with which he is not yet familiar and which thus seems much more interesting to him than the artworks at his family's estate at Gardencourt:

> '[a] character like that,' he said to himself – 'a real little passionate force to see at play is the finest thing in nature. It's finer than the finest work of art – than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titian, than a gothic cathedral. […] I had never expected less that anything pleasant would happen. Suddenly I receive a Titian, by the post, to hang on my wall – a Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece. The key to a beautiful edifice is thrust into my hands, and I'm told to walk in and admire.'[360]

Isabel is within his reach, not separated by the distance of a classical painting. According to him, she is an enhanced art work. For his representation and making sense of Isabel, Ralph sticks with the predominant visual language of representation of his time and surroundings: Renaissance painting.

Ralph does not recognize what Isabel considers great and elaborate marriage choices nor does he understand how important it is to her that she is capable of reasoning out problems that life presents. He utters a warning, but cannot make her understand the danger of reasoning detached from experience: Ralph: "You want to see, but not to feel."[361] Ralph beholds the next hypothetical painting of his cousin at a time when her decision to marry Osmond is already fixed. Against this background, he detects her strong will and the determination in her eye that is "illuminated by a sentiment which contradicts the careful calmness of her manner – a mingled sentiment, to which the angry pain excited by his words and the wounded pride of having needed to justify the choice of which she felt only the nobleness and purity, equally contributed."[362] Her pride for her choice, which is due much more to her having made the difficult decision whether to marry at all than to her resolution to marry the little-appreciated Gilbert Osmond, shows in her eyes. She is annoyed that Ralph does not recognize the moral achievement of her extensive reasoning regarding this difficult decision.

Ralph, in a sense, reflects Isabel's romantic drive to live life at its fullest and perceives Isabel's imagination as remarkably active"[363], whereas in initial descriptions and from her aunt's point of view her imagination was labelled "ridiculously active." [364] Isabel wants to make her own decisions for herself. She does not know yet that living life at its fullest also means to carry the burdens of her decisions. Isabel wants satisfaction and to be pleased with life and herself which is a very modern concept.[365] And she wants the satisfaction of her plans working out for her. When her plans go wrong,

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[359] *PL* 100

[360] *PL* 116

[361] *PL* 203

[362] *PL* 398

[363] *PL* 103

[364] *PL* 86

[365] Cf. *PL* 109, 110

she shuts herself off from Ralph, denying him the opportunity to help her shape new and more refined ideas for her life.

3.2.1.3 Warburton's and Isabel's Contribution to the Portrait of the Heroine

Warburton does not see Isabel's reasoning and struggles at all. He is charmed by her being fresh and different. For him, she stands for these things. Warburton treats her like a new species and reduces her to "a really interesting little figure."[366] Accordingly, he sees her in the following way, in the Mariana pose, when she does not want to consent to marriage:

> Isabel walked to the other side of the gallery and stood there showing him her charming back, her light slim figure, the length of her white neck as she bent her head, and the density of her dark braids. She stopped in front of a small picture as if for the purpose of examining it; and there was something so young and free in her movement that her very pliancy seemed to mock at him. Her eyes, however, saw nothing; they had suddenly been suffused with tears.[367]

Isabel's sight of a painting is once again blocked, this time by tears. She is sad and has vivid emotions about an issue he does not comprehend. He only sees her figure, her silhouette, her frame, and this he likes greatly. He does not suspect any emotions in her. In his Mariana painting, he foreshadows that of Pansy when the young girl is seen as the "small figure"[368] of which Isabel could be a spectator, but will not be. Even later and in her future husband Osmond's company, Warburton sees "nothing but the clear profile of this young lady defined against the dim illumination of the house"[369] when "Miss Archer was seated facing the stage and partly screened by the curtain of the box; and beside her, leaning back in his chair, was Mr Gilbert Osmond."[370] With this image of her, he foreshadows the *Awakening Conscience* scene that shows Mme Merle together with Osmond half-covered behind a curtain. Warburton's view does two things: first, it curtails Isabel by her being likened to a "figure" and a "profile" and second, it parallels Mme Merle's and Isabel's lots in life and thus predicts the fact that Isabel is determined by this woman and Osmond.

Isabel's pensive pose before rejecting Warburton's marriage proposal is the image she holds up against Warburton's image-making practices and inclusion of multiple views. The pose indicates her being lost rather than her having a made-up mind and an idea of how she wishes to come across. Consequently, her pose cannot stop Warburton from executing a curtailing gaze:

> It seemed to her at last that she would do well to take a book; formerly when heavy-hearted, she had been able, with the help of a well-chosen volume, tor transfer the seat of consciousness to the organ of pure reason. Of late, it was not to be denied, literature had seemed a fading light, and even after she had reminded herself that her uncle's library was provided with a

[366] *PL* 116

[367] *PL* 185

[368] *PL* 368

[369] *PL* 350

[370] *PL* 349

> complete set of those authors which no gentleman's collection should be without, she sat motionless and empty-handed, her eyes bent on the cool green turf of the lawn. Her meditations were presently interrupted by the arrival of a servant who handed her a letter [Goodwood's]. […] Isabel read this missive with such deep attention that she had not perceived an approaching tread on the soft grass. Looking up, however, as she mechanically folded it she saw Lord Warburton standing before her. [371]

Isabel senses her impulse to form an independent union for the first time when Warburton proposes marriage to her. She does not want to be caught in the social web, of which she is strongly reminded by the appearance of a lord. She clearly chooses an unconventional way because it is her own way. She already did so with Goodwood's marriage proposal and now she also declines a possible suitor of heroines of earlier times. She wants "a system and an orbit of her own"[372] a goal in connection with which she fails to see the challenge that perfect individuality is impossible. By leaving America, she had to let go of a source of knowledge that gave her stability – books – and she does not yet have a recipe to develop knowledge from what she experiences. Consequently, she does not have strong enough images that are based on a self-conscious "system" and order of herself with which to go into a negotiation with other-images of her.

3.2.1.4 Goodwood's and Isabel's Contribution to the Portrait of the Heroine

Goodwood represents the easy choice for Isabel which would have made her trip to Europe altogether obsolete. The Mariana scenes that Goodwood witnesses come after the one Warburton sees in the narrative, but Goodwood's marriage proposal is the first. They all reflect that Mariana's room is no prison, neither of society, nor of her mind: there are windows, no paintings; the windows are open; Isabel detects regular life outside and the immediacy of her surroundings; there is movement in the heroine from her Mariana position when she looks out the window and turns towards the intruder; and the female character gets to speak her mind as well as being looked at.

She is seen by the American suitor when explaining her choice not to marry Warburton, not to marry at all, and philosophizing about her liberty and independence: "She turned away from him, walked to the open window and stood a moment looking into the dusky void of the street, where a turbid gaslight alone represented social animation."[373] He sees the open window; she sees a void. He does not see why she struggles in the first place. For him, there is nothing bad in choosing an easy and obvious option. She, however, feels much challenged by her wanting and having to choose. This produces the next Mariana scene:

> It was not of [Ralph], nevertheless, that she was thinking while she stood at the window near which we found her a while ago, […]. She was not turned to the past, but to the immediate, impending hour. She had reason to expect a scene […]. It could be nothing soothing – she had warrant for this, and the conviction doubtless showed in the cloud on her brow. […] she continued to

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[371] *PL* 153-54

[372] *PL* 156

[373] *PL* 212

> gaze out of the window after the footman had retired. It was only when she had heard the door close behind the person who presently entered that she looked round.[374]

And some instances later

> [s]he got up with a movement of repressed impatience and walked to the window, where she remained a moment looking out. When she turned round her visitor was still motionless in his place. […] 'Do you mean you came simply to look at me?'[375]

He sees in her turning towards him a gesture which in this analysis stands for a moment of realization, deduced from the Awakening Conscience scene. And she is well-aware of him looking at her which also hints at the mature state she has reached. Goodwood sees her in her Mariana position like this: "Caspar Goodwood stood there – stood and received a moment, from head to foot, the bright, dry gaze with which she rather withheld than offered a greeting.[376] The reason why Goodwood's Mariana scenes qualify as a Mariana scene, despite the fact that they hold various elements of the Awakening Conscience scene, is obviously Isabel's doing. She sees complexity in the situation; he does not.

He manages to strongly challenge her, however, because he challenges her aspiration of being different and reminds her that they, as Americans, are already different from Europeans. According to him, being different would be perfectly possible in America, which is, of course, a kind of being different that is not enough for Isabel. It is not a purpose in life which requires development, but simply a given reality for an American with nothing to fight for – an idealized picture that Goodwood draws. Nevertheless, with his passion, he causes her emotions to burst out, whereas all the other characters only call forth endless reasoning. This he does not see because it happens after their meeting: "Five minutes after he had gone out she burst into tears."[377] She loses her countenance even before her marriage at a time when she could avert what will turn out to be a severe decision in her life. However, she does not allow anybody, not even herself, to see it. She hides her inner image. He does not recognize it. Mirroring is thus not yet possible.

Isabel also misses Awakening Conscience opportunities with Mme Merle and Pansy. Her contribution and stake in the shaping of the portrait of her becomes even clearer in her relationships with these two female characters, since Isabel is the spectator of Mariana poses and could mirror her position with the female characters' in the painting (which would bring her into the Awakening Conscience scene). In Mme Merle and Pansy, Isabel could see the work of Osmond – the work of the master. She could mirror and thus understand her own transformation of an independent and lively young woman into Osmond's ideal of a lady. Isabel perceives Mme Merle in the Mariana pose, notices that the woman has nothing natural about her (it is all representation and appearance), and furthermore receives a lecture from the lady on how circumstances and symbols determine one's character. But nothing helps to raise Isabel's awareness of the influence of society on one's own

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[374] *PL* 377

[375] *PL* 381

[376] *PL* 377

[377] *PL* 383

possibilities and roles. Isabel is the only character who has hypothetical paintings of Mme Merle. It is as if this experienced woman was there for her in order to teach her the dangers of naivety and idealistic views. However, when she sees Mme Merle in Mariana moments, she is not yet alerted to representation questions and does not see that she is also a Mariana. In a close study of Mme Merle she could learn about and prevent the events that definitely bring her into Mariana's closed-windowed room. When Isabel recognizes Pansy in the Mariana pose, it is too late for her to change anything about her own representation. She can only help Pansy get a certain amount of freedom in her father's prison.

3.2.1.5 Mme Merle as Mariana – Mme Merle's and Isabel's Contribution to the Portrait of the Heroine

The first Mariana scene presents itself at Gardencourt when Mr. Touchett lies in his death bed and Mme Merle has come to see Mrs. Touchett. Isabel's

> […] arrival was not noticed by the person seated before the instrument. This person was neither Ralph nor his mother; it was a lady whom Isabel immediately saw to be a stranger to herself, though her back was presented to the door. This back – an ample and well-dressed one – Isabel viewed for some moments with surprise.[378]

The scene is deceptive. It shows the female character as active artist. At first sight, this scene reveals nothing -which brings to mind a Mariana scene. Beside music, Mme Merle is "employed upon wonderful tasks of rich embroidery, cushions, curtains, decorations for the chimney-piece; an art in which her bold, free invention was as noted as the agility of her needle."[379] In her appraisal of the lady, Isabel does not take into account the fact that these are all tasks envisaged for a lady. As a consequence, Isabel misreads her as the female artist, virtuous and free. To "our speculative heroine"[380], Mme Merle's "expression charmed." [381] In fact, "[...] each new acquaintance would exert some momentous influence on her life."[382]

Isabel ascribed too much culture to conventional activities, which is altogether more surprising for a girl who wants to be different.

> If for Isabel she had a fault, it was that she was not natural; by which the girl meant […] that her nature had been too much overlaid by custom and her angles too much rubbed away. She had become too flexible, too useful, was too ripe and too final. She was in a word too perfectly the social animal that man and woman are supposed to have been intended to be […].[383]

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[378] *PL* 225

[379] *PL* 243

[380] *PL* 225

[381] *PL* 226

[382] *PL* 225

[383] *PL* 244

The natural self cannot be detected anymore. Isabel could have known that this person who is utterly dependent of customs should not impress Isabel, the girl who does not want to be conventional at all; she could see what culture and tradition does to a clever and lively woman. But she is not alarmed, "feeling that a charming surface doesn't necessarily prove one superficial […]."[384] Isabel accepts convention and, for the first time, breaks her own rules.

For her representation and in order to make sense of Mme Merle, Isabel chooses the visual language that she knows to be associated with high culture in order to do justice to Mme Merle's high class. Excited about this new acquaintance and the new adventures that such an acquaintance would facilitate, she lets herself be enchanted by this strange, mysterious woman's appearance. In her idealized way of regarding Gardencourt and all characters in it, Isabel perceives Mme Merle as a classical picture, "as if she were a Bust, Isabel judged – a Juno or a Niobe; and large white hands, of a perfect shape, a shape so perfect that their possessor, preferring to leave them unadorned, wore no jeweled rings."[385] Isabel is deceived by the classical beauty that, to her, is a reflection of a beautiful character. The reference to Juno and Niobe foreshadows the turns in Isabel's and Mme Merle's fate provoked by their acquaintance – Juno as the "chief Roman goddess […] who was credited with helping young women to contract advantageous marriages"[386] and Niobe as a Greek legendary figure who loses all her children and turns "into rock, from which her tears trickled in a constant stream."[387] Isabel creates a history painting of her future husband's accomplice in the same way and with the same motivation as she chooses a history painting of her husband later on. Unable to read classical/allegorical paintings correctly and thus unable to read the signs that would warn her about this seemingly perfect and harmless woman, Isabel only feels fascination. The traces of "a large experience"[388] render this woman even more interesting to her young spectator. In fact, "[i]t took no great time for her to feel herself […] under an influence"[389] – an influence felt by choice. She greatly admires Mme Merle's cultivation and attributes it to the woman's "aristocratic situation."[390] As a consequence of her idealization of Mme Merle's cultivation, she feels inferior and sees in her relationship with the woman a chance to grow. Isabel gives the woman a restrictive shape (that of classical symbols) although she knows that the woman is not superficial. She does not regard with a critical eye Mme Merles inner images and would never suspect that evil practices could be found in such a precious lady.

Isabel's readiness to accept Osmond is only a direct consequence of Isabel's naiveté and Mme Merle's abuse of the same. Mme Merle prepares her to like Osmond. Isabel's image of Osmond depends on his being a friend of Mme Merle's and of him having been introduced to Isabel by this lady

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[384] *PL* 244

[385] *PL* 228

[386] Crick 645

[387] Crick 645

[388] *PL* 228

[389] *PL* 242

[390] *PL* 242

from the very beginning. This lady was sent out to meet the young available woman and prepare her for Osmond's proposal. It was all part of Osmond's plan. Mme Merle thus already mentions her good friend Osmond during one of their first encounters and compares him to Ralph, who, as Mme Merle knows, is very dear to Isabel. She presents Osmond in his best light and compares Osmond's idleness with Ralph's, ignoring completely the fact that Ralph's lack of occupation is absolutely adequate given his class and his health condition. Mme Merle's introduction of Osmond can be seen as a stage direction that precedes his actual entrance on stage. Isabel will find Osmond agreeable, since Mme Merle prepared her to see him in this manner. Osmond is thus part of the illusion that Mme Merle inspires in Isabel. When the future husband and wife actually meet, Isabel is as struck by what she sees as she was when she met Mme Merle for the first time. After the Awakening Conscience scene, however, Isabel grows aware that Osmond played his tricks through Mme Merle. "[…] it was as if she had given to a comparative stranger the key to her cabinet of jewels."[391]

How illusions are formed, namely by ignoring the fact that conventions and features that are visible in society determine the self, is spelled out to Isabel by Mme Merle herself. The lady tells her that Osmond's house will express his character (which only charms rather than alarms Isabel). The house stands for a representative frame, a "shell," given to or chosen by a character to have a certain appearance.

> 'I don't care anything about his house.' said Isabel. 'That's very crude of you. When you've lived as long as I you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our 'self'? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us – and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for things! One's self – for other people – is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garment, the books one reads, the company one keeps – these things are all expressive.'[392]

The form, shape, convention is not simply a choice of expression, but it defines a character. Isabel fails to recognize that this statement will prove very true for herself:

> 'I don't agree with you. I think just the other way. I don't know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything's on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one. Certainly the clothes which, as you say, I choose to wear, don't express me; and heaven forbid they should!' […] The clothes may express the dressmaker, but they don't express me. To begin with it's not my own choice that I wear them; they're imposed upon me by society.'[393]

Isabel does not succeed in expressing herself. She knows that she does not want to be determined by things, shells, and conventions. Self-expression and self-determination do not work for her. Isabel's

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[391] *PL* 239

[392] *PL* 253

[393] *PL* 253

words are a call for a representation of her inner life and true personality that cannot be transported through her surface/form.

Osmond's second house, the one in Rome, forms the background of Isabel's 'portrait of a lady.' The house, i.e., the Palazzo Roccanera, is presented from Ned Rosier's point of view at a time when Isabel's marriage has already reached the state that evokes an image of imprisonment at the sight of the black rock. The house embodies the husband's nature and represents a prison for the wife. It is "…a high house in the heart of Rome; a dark massive structure."[394] Also, his first house in Florence, whose façade "[...] was the mask, not the face of a house [and which] had heavy lids, but no eyes [...]"[395], is an example of a "shell" that determines its inhabitants, as described by Mme Merle. This shell is exclusively concerned with form, but lacks any presentation of essence. Accordingly, the function of the windows "seemed less to offer communication with the world than to defy the world to look in."[396] The reader, not a character, gets a glimpse of the people inside and sees in one of the rooms that "a gentleman was seated in company with a young girl and two good sisters from a religious house."[397] This group of the father, the (religious mother) and the innocent child is characterized as "composing well"[398] – a perfect theme within a carefully chosen frame by the master of the house. The Florence house is an imaginary painting and the Rome painting a hypothetical one, but only seen by one character. Isabel does not see the expressive façades.

Isabel's expression of herself remains ineffective because in Stage 1, she does not trust herself to come up with a specific idea of what it should look like that expresses her. She does not trust herself with a vision and only wants to live up to the image she believes Mme Merle had sketched of her in front of Osmond. "There was something in [Osmond] that checked her and held her in suspense – made it more important she should get an impression of him than that she should produce one herself."[399] Accordingly, when she goes to see him and Pansy she saw "romantic objects" and "how he […] held his little girl by the hand" until

> she was oppressed at last with the accumulation of beauty and knowledge to which she found herself introduced. […] A part of Isabel's fatigue came from the effort to appear as intelligent as she believed Madame Merle had described her, and from the fear (very unusual with her) of exposing – not her ignorance; for that she cared comparatively little – but her possible grossness of perception.[400]

She senses the "grossness" of her own gaze, but does not see that it is by hiding her own sight and leaving it underdeveloped that she falls victim to somebody who has a clear idea of how he wants to

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394 *PL* 415

395 *PL* 278

396 *PL* 279

397 *PL* 279

398 *PL* 278

399 *PL* 298

400 *PL* 313

represent both himself and the heroine. Isabel falls in love over paintings, his connoisseurship and her ignorance:

> He took down the picture, carried it toward the window, related some curious facts about it. She looked at the other works of art, and he gave her such further information as might appear most acceptable to a young lady making a call on a summer afternoon. His pictures, his medallions and tapestries were interesting; but after a while Isabel felt the owner much more so, and independently of them, thickly as they seemed to overhang him. He resembled no one she had ever seen; most of the people she knew might be divided into groups of half a dozen specimens. […] Her mind contained no class offering a natural place to Mr Osmond – he was specimen apart. [401]

Here we have a Mariana moment that had been created by Mme Merle. Mme Merle is the spectator of the scene that even includes Osmond. She is responsible for there being a Mariana moment at Osmond's house.

Hiding her own gaze is equivalent to her not questioning Merle's introduction of Osmond and her sketch of the man: "With all her love of knowledge [Isabel] had a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners. The love of knowledge coexisted in her mind with the finest capacities for ignorance."[402] When she finally meets Osmond, Isabel treats Osmond with the delicacy of a rare artwork – notably an original one, since she discerns him in this manner. His face reminds her of a painting, which reflects "his being artistic through and through."[403] Her picture of him conveys quality: "[h]is dense, delicate hair, his overdrawn, retouched features, his clear complexion, ripe without being coarse, the very evenness of the growth of his beard, and that light, smooth slenderness of structure which made the movement of a single one of his fingers produce the effect of an expressive gesture."[404] Osmond's features are "retouched" both by Mme Merle in order to present him in a favorable way and by Isabel who adopts Mme Merle's presentation and turns it into her own. In Mme Merle, all would have been spelled out for Isabel and still she misjudged her. The woman has an unnamable influence on her and it will take Isabel a while to discover the woman's entire stake in her destiny.

3.2.1.6 Pansy as Mariana – The Creation of a Lady for Isabel to Watch

For the image of Pansy, Isabel entirely relies on Osmond's creation. When Isabel sees her, the girl already represents the perfect girl on her way to becoming a lady. In the same way that Isabel's "light slim figure" is perceived by Lord Warburton, Pansy's "slim, small figure"[405] is seen by her father as she turns her back to him and looks at artworks he has drawn. This is a crucial scene, since it

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[401] *PL* 311

[402] *PL* 251

[403] *PL* 298

[404] *PL* 312

[405] *PL* 280

demonstrates Osmond's "aestheticist view"[406] with which he turns everything he looks at into a piece of art. The situation when he talks to Pansy about his own paintings is indicative: Pansy turns around from one of her father's creations and presents herself to his gaze, in her case a sign of submitting to his authority, not of realization and mirroring. "She was evidently impregnated with the idea of submission, which was due to any one who took the tone of authority; and she was a passive spectator of the operation of her fate."[407] Osmond immediately paints on her a "small, fair face […] with a fixed and intensely sweet smile,"[408] turning her into a work of art just like his painting next to her. Isabel never finds herself in a scene where she figures as an object of Osmond's painting as explicitly as Pansy does in the above-mentioned scene. The reason for the absence of such an illustrative moment is that Isabel is not aware of him treating her in the exact same way as Pansy, namely as a mere artwork, exercising on her the absolute authority granted to the creator of such a piece.

Pansy's noble and pretty appearance is imposed by her father – the "style of a little princess"[409] – and, although of artificial nature, it improves his image and lends it a noble touch. Osmond tries to give his creation one last refinement when trying to marry her to Lord Warburton: "[m]y daughter has only to sit perfectly quiet to become Lady Warburton" (469). She is evidently the product of Osmond, but eventually develops her own ideas to the dislike of her father, who finally sends her back to the convent in order to keep complete power over her. Ostensibly, he tries to preserve her moral purity, but his aim is actually to maintain the excellence of his artistic creation. His attempt to protect Pansy from artless and uncultivated influences reminds one of the conduct in regard to Santa Barbara, who is also locked up under the pretense of protection, but with the goal of exercising power on her. Osmond chooses a saint for the representation of Pansy.

Osmond explains to Isabel his creation of perfect innocence and good manners just like he explained the paintings to her on an earlier visit: "[…] I've brought up my child, as I wished, in the old way." [410] Pansy gives "new grace to childhood"[411] and represents the "ideal *jeune fille* of foreign fiction."[412] "Isabel was impressed by Osmond's artistic, the plastic view, as it somehow appeared, of Pansy's innocence."[413] "Pansy was really a blank page, a pure white surface, successfully kept so [...]."[414] This is a Pygmalion moment that Isabel praises instead of being alarmed by. The artist proudly presents his creation and clearly shows that he intends to always keep her as his creation. Isabel does not perceive this intention.

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[406] Witemeyer "Landscape and the Beholder" par. 74

[407] *PL* 286

[408] *PL* 280

[409] *PL* 420

[410] *PL* 404

[411] *PL* 327

[412] *PL* 328

[413] *PL* 404

[414] *PL* 366

Before seeing Pansy in a Mariana pose, Isabel sees the young girl on a threshold in a door frames, an image which, on the one hand, foreshadows Isabel's own appearance in the deep doorway as the 'gracious lady' created by Osmond and, on the other hand, strongly reinforces the image of the woman on the threshold which can be considered the threshold of Mariana's room. On the threshold, Pansy appears to Isabel for the first time when her decision to marry Osmond is already made and Isabel sees her as "[...] the small figure [who] stood in the high, dark doorway"[415] of the door that Osmond does not allow her to go beyond. "Pansy stood in the open doorway; she had drawn back the curtain for Isabel to pass." [416] At this moment, Isabel sees that in Pansy all is learned and she suspects that the girl would otherwise have received "penalties for non-performance."[417] Pansy's so well-preserved naturalness is nothing other than artificiality imposed by Osmond which Isabel sees, but does not understand.

The witnessed Mariana pose takes place in Pansy's room and represents the religious version of the painting. It shows the girl praying – her "simplicity" and purity stressed, but also her suffering:

> Pansy's supreme simplicity, an innocence even more complete than Isabel had yet judged it, gave to the most tentative enquiry something of the effect of an admonition. As she knelt there in the vague firelight, with her pretty dress dimly shining, her hand folded half in appeal and half in submission, her soft eyes, raised and fixed, full of the seriousness of the situation, she looked to Isabel like a childish martyr decked out of sacrifice and scarcely presuming even to hope to avert it.[418]

Isabel senses that the child must have sacrificed own wishes and desires. Pansy holds a deep treasure of thoughts and dreams inside of her. Isabel recognizes Pansy's inner images only much later. She experiences at this later moment how easily other characters' images can be forgotten. As a consequence, "Isabel was touched with wonder at the depths of perception of which this submissive little person was capable; she felt afraid of Pansy's wisdom – began almost to retreat before it."[419] For the time being, Isabel does not suspect any depth in Pansy, which is hard to believe – Isabel who is so concerned with having her own ways and encourages others to have them too.

3.2.1.7 The Portrait of Isabel

Isabel lacks the "wisdom" of how Osmond sacrificed her own ideas and modern traits in the same way as Pansy's. Converting Isabel into his own artwork signifies shaping her according to his taste. Isabel's only fault, that of having too many ideas – indeed, he considers the jewel otherwise flawless – is corrected in Osmond's adaptation. Her theories are sacrificed, which Osmond considers no problem, since, in his opinion, they have not been good ones – this is a sign of his arrogance. By

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[415] *PL* 368-69

[416] *PL* 520

[417] *PL* 406

[418] *PL* 516

[419] *PL* 519

restricting her inner life, he reduces Isabel to "her pretty appearance."[420] Whereas Osmond's practices are laid bare in connection with Pansy, his creation of Isabel as 'the portrait of a lady' happens in private, and only becomes visible to the public when he considers it accomplished. From Osmond's reference to the static appearance of Mme Merle, we learn that the immobile state is his preferred one in a woman. He tells Mme Merle: "You always *are* the same. You don't vary. You're a wonderful woman."[421] Isabel's many ideas were chiseled away as Osmond shaped her into his image of a classical beauty.

The result of such a practice is Isabel's passive air. Her moral spontaneity has faded during her marriage, which Isabel's appearance as a lady shows:

> Isabel, as she grew older, became acquainted with revulsions, with disgust; there were days when the world looked black and she asked herself with some sharpness what it was that she was pretending to live for. Her old habit had been to live by enthusiasm, to fall in love with suddenly-perceived possibilities, with the idea of some new adventure. As a younger person she had been used to proceed from one little exaltation to the other; there were scarcely any dull places between. But Madame Merle had suppressed enthusiasm; she fell in love now-a-days with nothing; she lived entirely by reason and by wisdom. There were hours when Isabel would have given anything for lessons in this art […]. She had become aware more than before of the advantage of being like that – of having made one's self a firm surface, a sort of corselet of silver.[422]

She does not live "by enthusiasm" anymore, but controls her every impulse. She sees an advantage in living and appearing like this, since it does not aggravate her husband. Isabel recognizes that she resembles Mme Merle in this: Isabel who tries to hide her sorrows in marriage looks "similarly static like the visual arts." [423]

A little later, Ralph also observes Isabel's fixedness. Spontaneity, quick eagerness, movement, and gaiety were all sacrificed and curtailed in the 'portrait of the lady:'

> […] for him she would always wear a mask. […] There was something fixed and mechanical in the serenity painted on it; this was not an expression, Ralph said – it was a representation, it was even an advertisement. […] Ralph in all this recognized the hand of the master; for he knew that Isabel had no faculty for producing studied impressions. She struck him as having a great love of movement, of gaiety, of late hours, of long rides, of fatigue; an eagerness to be entertained, to be interested, even to be bored, to make acquaintances, to see people who were talked about, to explore the neighbourhood of Rome, to enter into relation with certain of the mustiest relics of its old society.[424]

The hand of the master is clearly visible to him:

> […] what he saw was the fine lady who was supposed to represent something. […] she represented Gilbert Osmond […]; he recognized him at

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[420] *PL* 477

[421] *PL* 288

[422] *PL* 452

[423] Torgovnick 159

[424] *PL* 442-43

> every turn. He saw how he kept all things within limits; how he adjusted, regulated, animated their manner of life. Osmond was in his element; at last he had material to work with. He always had an eye to effect, and his effects were deeply calculated. They were produced by no vulgar means, but the motive was as vulgar as the art was great. To surround his interior with a sort of invidious sanctity, to tantalize society with a sense of exclusion, to make people believe his house was different from every other, to impart on the face that he presented to the world a cold originality – this was the ingenious effort of the personage to whom Isabel had attributed a superior morality. 'He works with superior material,' said Ralph to himself; 'it's rich abundance compared with his former resources.' Ralph […] observed […] that under the guise of caring only for intrinsic values Osmond lived exclusively for the world. […] Everything he did was *pose* – *pose* so subtly considered that if one were not on the lookout one mistook it for impulse. […] His ambition was not to please the world, but to please himself by exciting the world's curiosity and the declining to satisfy it. It had made him feel great, ever, to play the world a trick. The thing he had done in his life most directly to please himself was his marrying Miss Archer; though in this case indeed the gullible world was in a manner embodied in poor Isabel, who had been mystified to the top of her bent.[425]

Ralph provides a close study of the portrait and the artist. He sees Isabel's appearance as that of a "fine lady" in "rich abundance," but does not recognize any of the traits that he is used to in Isabel. Isabel is modelled by the artist's hand. Every "turn" is studied; a turn that would yield consciousness would not be imaginable in this static form of the lady. Isabel's spontaneous movements are tamed. Ralph has never seen as clearly as at that moment how Osmond operates. He admits that this man's methods are hard to read; he "tricks" the world like a "magician" into believing that he cares and puts his exquisite taste to the benefit of all his loved ones. Once the work is completed, it becomes part of the artist's collection. After a year of marriage, Osmond loses interest in his artwork. As the novelty subsides, he focuses on a new project – the creation of another 'portrait of a lady,' i.e., that of Pansy.

3.2.1.8 Challenge through Henrietta

Only one character opposes Osmond's creation of Isabel as a lady, and through her to that of Pansy. It is her realist journalist and art critic friend Henrietta Stackpole, who smells "of the Future – it almost knocks one down"[426] and radically challenges the old world and the given conventions. After Mme Merle, she is the second character who spells out for Isabel the process of illusion-making, but neither with Henrietta does the young woman understand or accept this knowledge. Henrietta nourishes Isabel's inner life, i.e., her activity to create her *third painting*, in three ways: First, she "offered so high an example of useful activity that Isabel always thought of her as a model."[427] Isabel intuitively knows that a life needs to be actively lived in a modern way and is not simply given to you by modern conventions. She does not want to copy Henrietta's life, however, because that does not represent being modern and following her own purpose. Second, she raises her awareness to the danger of

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[425] *PL* 444-45

[426] *PL* 147

[427] *PL* 105

illusions. “The peril for you is that you live too much in the world of your own dreams. You’re not enough in contact with reality […].”[428] In Mariana terms, Henrietta tells Isabel that she focuses too much on her inner image and does not harmonize it with her ideals (religious painting) and her immediate reality (nature picture).

> ’What are my illusions?’ [Isabel] asked. ‘I try so hard not to have any.’ ‘Well,’ said Henrietta, ‘you think you can lead a romantic life that you can live by pleasing yourself and pleasing others. You’ll find you’re mistaken. Whatever life you lead you must put your soul in it – to make any sort of success of it; and from the moment you do that it ceases to be romance. […] You think we can escape disagreeable duties by taking romantic views – that’s your great illusion, my dear.[429]

Third, Henrietta re-encodes a Correggio painting that Osmond would have superficially encoded as prestigious and thus manages to lay bare the powerful meaning that it always potentially contained and needed only to have been recognized. It is Correggio’s *Adoration of a Child*, Henrietta’s favorite painting.[430] I will analyze the painting and the references to Correggio made by Osmond and Henrietta to demonstrate a negotiation about representation that the two do not actually have, but that the novel sketches by paralleling their views. By nourishing her friend’s inner life, Henrietta attacks Osmond’s frame for her.

Henrietta tries to fill life and nobility by means of a Correggio painting representation of Isabel. A reference to this artist, which Osmond makes *en passant*, can be viewed as the materialization of Isabel’s situation and Henrietta’s effort and is therefore a crucial moment in the novel and, in addition, a direct allusion to *Middlemarch*. It furthermore offers the platform for Henrietta’s battling with Osmond’s artistic practices. The art critic Henrietta’s “quest of artistic beauty”[431] differs from his. She understands beauty as inner beauty; he as classical beauty. Osmond’s use of an allegorical painting by Correggio is challenged by Henrietta’s realist use of a Correggio painting. His allegorical paintings are not challenged by genre paintings he creates himself, but by realist tendencies Henrietta detects in his allegorical paintings. Osmond mentions Correggio when he tries to convince Isabel of his independent and generous attitude, which is part of his courtship of the young woman. Osmond makes known that he once copied a Correggio, copying artworks being his preliminary artistic occupation. He then states that, if necessary, he would renounce everything but the Correggio, which Isabel interprets as a sign of independence. He also claims that he would not force his daughter Pansy to bother about “Correggios and crucifixes”[432] if she were not interested in them, which, to Isabel, is a sign of generosity and understanding. At this moment, Correggio is used to outline Osmond’s qualities to Isabel, rather than to make any statements about the artist and his paintings, for Isabel uses the artist in this way. In this sense, the mention of Correggio is an obvious allusion to Dorothea’s use of the word Correggiosities, which means art in general that has no

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[428] *PL* 267

[429] *PL* 268

[430] Houghton par 1

[431] *PL* 505

[432] *PL* 316

meaning for her and that rather relates to the practice of collecting art pieces, i.e., Osmond's interest in art. The artist is also mentioned in Rosier's description of the prison-like, dark house in which Isabel and Pansy live. Later on, however, the same artist is mentioned again when Henrietta sees the painting of "the Virgin kneeling down before the sacred infant, who lies in a litter of straw, and clapping her hands to him while he delightedly laughs and crows."[433] The painting described by Henrietta evokes Correggio's *Adoration of the Child* (cf. Figure 14).

The child in this sensual painting responds to the Madonna, just like Henrietta describes it in the evoked painting. The source of light in the painting is the child. He radiates his innocence which reflects on the Virgin's hands, face, and heart. It is inner life that openly pours out of the child's body frame. There is no hindering boundary of the shape, form, or symbol. The painting displays a mirroring of adoration as an essentially pure emotion and a relationship not burdened by personal ambitions and possible cruelty. This scene is as pure as a representation of an emotion can be. The adoration comes from the Virgin (based on the title of the painting), but is mirrored back from the child once innocence and warmth illuminate in the Madonna. Reciprocity and interaction in this sense is represented in this painting.

Figure 14 *Adoration of the Child* by Correggio[434]

On her trip to Rome, which Henrietta undertakes in order to see Isabel and prove her friend's innocence concerning the suspicion that she might have committed adultery, Henrietta visits this particular painting. Relying on the clear-cut views of our realistic character, the painting anticipates the situation in which she will find Isabel when she sees her in Rome. The painting might even be a materialization of the wish to encounter an Isabel who is as pure as the Madonna in the painting,

[433] *PL* 505

[434] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <https://www.virtualuffizi.com/adoration-of-the-child_1.html>

rather than as an adulterous sinner. In order to refer to Isabel's moral values, a representation as a saint seems to be adequate to Henrietta, who does not choose a saint and an allegorical painting for the sake of mere prestige. If a realist character creates an allegorical painting, it has a different effect than if it is created by a character like Osmond. Henrietta's choice of this painting emphasizes the harmony of earthly and spiritual matters that she is able to see in the painting and that others who are only concerned with the visible would miss. Henrietta makes a Pre-Raphaelite claim at this point of the novel. Osmond mentioned the painter when sketching a future with Isabel that would necessarily also bring her together with his daughter Pansy. Henrietta actually perceives Isabel in constant company and as a guard of the child. Henrietta and Osmond create a Madonna-like representation of Isabel by sketching Correggio's *Adoration of the Child* of her. Henrietta and Osmond offer different versions of the same painting, not two different kinds of paintings, for the representation of the heroine. This is how a negotiation of allegorical and realist paintings is done in *Portrait of a Lady*. The conclusion that can already be drawn here is, in any case, that the accuracy and moral achievement of an artistic creation do not only depend on particular painters or painting eras, but more importantly on the spectator of the paintings. If the spectator is examined as creator of a scene, the necessity of being able to see inside an object in order to be able to reproduce inner truth, not only outer appearance, becomes even more obvious. It becomes clear that apart from Henrietta, nobody has an interest in really seeing Isabel's inner life, her spiritual and moral accomplishments, her desires and motivations, at first not even Isabel herself.

Osmond sees a precious artwork in Correggio and applies his idealizing view. In contrast, Henrietta tries to see actuality in the painting and bring it into a present-day context, to make it concern her and her surroundings. It is as if she captured Pansy's admiration towards Isabel that becomes clear due to instances when "[…] the girl exclaimed as if she were praying to the Madonna"[435] and due to her honest praise of Isabel: "I admire you so much that I think it will be a good fortune to have you always before me. You'll be my model [...]."[436] I will argue that it is precisely the relationship with her stepdaughter that will give Isabel a new purpose, a real purpose this time. It is a mirroring with the girl that brings her to the consciousness that she needs to form a plan which holds ideals, realism, and Isabel's experience – the harmonization of Mariana's three layers. In analogy to the underlying real painting it can be said that the child enlightens her emotions (heart), mind (head), and action (hands). This will be possible once Isabel is in her Awakening Conscience stage.

The way Isabel's Mariana stage is discussed in this analysis shows that the fact whether a spectator is in Mariana's room or not needs to be considered for every relationship separately. Both would be wrong: either to simply assume that a spectator is not inside Mariana's room or to simply assume that she is. Every relationship has the potential for a spectator to reveal indicators of her being in the Mariana stage. Clear-cut viewing can be aligned with looking for and detecting such indicators. Only in interaction are these elements brought to light and into a conscious space where

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[435] *PL* 517

[436] *PL* 405

they can be worked with. For Isabel, Stage 2 is identified as the moment when she actually starts going into an interaction.

3.2.2 Stage 2 – Awakening Conscience Step by Step and Relationship by Relationship

Since every relationship has to be negotiated separately, similarly the Awakening Conscience process takes place in connection with various characters. This learning process initiated in Stage 2 and carried out in Impulse 2 is thus scattered and extended from a mirroring and consciousness production with the two characters in the Awakening Conscience scene, Osmond and Mme Merle, to such an exchange with several characters who had a stake in the creation of Isabel's Mariana stage and the 'portrait of the lady.' Her physical response to the seen, i.e., her earnest dealing with what she can learn from her illusions, which is a requirement of an effective mirroring and Awakening Conscience, builds up with every confrontation and culminates in a breakdown in front of Ralph at his deathbed.

For quite some time in the novel, the Awakening Conscience process is presented in a more rational way than in Dorothea's case. Isabel hardly lets any emotions and intuitions show. Her definite decision to get married is blanked out. Her unhappiness is hidden under a mask. Her vigil is a short fever from which she almost immediately steps out again with a plan. Whereas in Dorothea's case, where the building of consciousness is a "Hamlet-like raving,"[437] Isabel's rather resembles a guideline to how to solve a case. The reader, together with Isabel, is guided through the story, taken by the hand in order to decipher visual impressions, images, and the image negotiation process. Isabel will only attain full consciousness in respect to the consciousness cycle provided in the *Portrait of a Lady* as soon as she allows her emotions to break out, a response to the visual experience is created, and she is "in contact with reality"[438] which already Henrietta named as a requirement. And this will only be possible when she accepts other sources of knowledge and experience than that of reasoning and imposing what she already knows (or believes to know) on what she sees. What is experienced has to concern and really touch her. This is what enables learning. Only towards the end of the novel does what she has learned through experience influence her perception and the images she creates.

A number of confrontations can be identified in Isabel's Awakening Conscience process of which two are the most important milestones: 1) A confrontation that can be titled the Awakening Conscience scene, a confrontation with Mme Merle and Osmond in a scene that evokes Hunt's painting and Dorothea's Awakening Conscience scene. 2) A confrontation with Mme Merle alone that repeats the first scene and allows for the true mirroring which was missing in the first scene. The confrontations with Mme Merle and Osmond circle around the topic of a match between Pansy and Lord Warburton. This topic unites all the stakes of all the stakeholders in this matter and in Isabel's situation. All confrontations lead to a knowledge development process in Isabel. She reveals all that

[437] *MM* 776

[438] *PL* 267

she could have seen with a clear-cut instead of an illusionary gaze. Some crucial nuggets of truth that go beyond what she could have captured even with a clear-cut view need to be explained to her: that Mme Merle is Pansy's mother and that Ralph is responsible for Isabel's fortune.

Whereas Dorothea discovered only a seeming relationship between Will and Rosamond, Isabel witnesses an intimacy of truly adulterous character. She discovers *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*[439] of her husband and Mme Merle when on her way to her favorite room in their house.

> Just beyond the threshold of the drawing-room, she stopped short, the reason for her doing so being that she had received an impression. The impression had, in strictness, nothing unprecedented; but she felt it as something new, and the soundlessness of her step gave her time to take in the scene before she interrupted it. Madame Merle was there in her bonnet, and Gilbert Osmond was talking to her; for a minute they were unaware she had come in. Isabel had often seen that before, certainly; but what she had not seen, or at least had not noticed, was that their colloquy had for the moment converted itself into a sort of familiar silence, from which she instantly perceived that her entrance would startle them. Madame Merle was standing on the rug, a little from the fire; Osmond was in a deep chair, leaning back and looking at her. Her head was erect, as usual, but her eyes were bent on his. What struck Isabel first was that he was sitting while Madame Merle stood; there was an anomaly in this that arrested her. Then she perceived that they had arrived at a desultory pause in their exchange of ideas and were musing, face to face, with the freedom of old friends who sometimes exchange ideas without uttering them. There is nothing to shock in this; they were old friends in fact. But the thing made an image, lasting only a moment, like a sudden flicker of light. Their relative positions, their absorbed mutual gaze, struck her as something detected. But it was all over by the time she had fairly seen it. Madame Merle had seen her and had welcomed her without moving; her husband, on the other hand, had instantly jumped up. He presently murmured something about wanting a walk and, after having asked their visitor to excuse him, left the room.[440]

Isabel stands on the threshold and detects the *third meaning* of the scene: "something new," "what she had not noticed." This sudden impression, "like a flicker of light,"[441] alters her image of her marriage with Osmond and her friendship with Mme Merle. Their intimacy implies that they have acted wrongly. Whether Isabel has detected adultery and has seen a version of *Awakening Conscience* or some other fault, she does not know. It is certain, however, that they have a secret. She assumes that this third meaning has something to do with her misjudgment of her husband which reveals her *blind spot*. She wants to uncover the secrets that led to her faulty choice of a husband. Clearing up secrets in other characters goes hand in hand with externalizing her own mental painting. Isabel will turn this impression into visions and, finally, clarity.

The mirroring with Mme Merle is postponed; a movement of a turn towards the overall spectator, as in Rosamond's case, does not happen yet. Mme Merle sees Isabel, but does not move. This implies that understanding this scene will have to take several turns. What Isabel sees is much

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[439] Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de Laclos's novel of 1782 tells the story of two aristocrats and ex-lovers who seduce people in order to hurt and degrade them and for their own amusement

[440] *PL* 457-58

[441] *PL* 458

more complex that what Dorothea saw. The scene arrested her, but Isabel goes on reading the scene, reasoning. It does not cause her body frame to shake; there is not yet an immediacy and a strong response. Mme Merle and Isabel have a conversation about this incident: Isabel gets more information by which to re-read previous happenings with newly gained knowledge from observing Mme Merle. This is not the mirror stage yet. They have a conversation which is not as deep and uncontrollable an exchange and necessarily does not reveal as much. It takes Isabel a while to discover the whole truth; she cannot read the hypothetical painting because the frame is dissolved when the scene is interrupted and because there are various stakeholders whom she needs to confront in order to learn. She starts to re-read, re-reading being nothing other than looking for *pictorial indicators* of Mariana moments in scenes stored in one's memory.

Upon witnessing the Awakening Conscience scene, Isabel has a vision of Osmond's real face when falling into meditation. This first part of her Impulse 2 reveals to her that she did not read Osmond correctly. She suddenly understands Osmond's controlling practices and his concern with form and appearance. "She had spoken of his insulting her, but it suddenly seemed to her that this ceased to be a pain. He was going down – down; the vision of such a fall made her almost giddy: that was the only pain."[442] She understands "his wish to preserve appearances"[443] and the fact that she (and also Pansy later on) threatens to expose Osmond's superficiality and his wrongs towards his wife and daughter. Osmond's ambition had been revealed when he tried to talk Isabel into convincing Warburton to marry Pansy. "[…] his words had put the situation before her and she was absorbed in looking at it." It was the "start that accompanies unexpected recognition."[444] She realized "the magnitude of his deception."[445] "[…] had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end."[446]

Isabel is now able to re-read previous moments: "He said to her one day that she had too many ideas and that she must get rid of them. He had told her that already, before their marriage; but then she had not noticed it: it had come back to her only afterwards."[447] At this moment she recognizes that her marriage is a prison:

> Between those four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind gave it neither light nor air; Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mock at her.[448]

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[442] *PL* 528

[443] *PL* 584

[444] *PL* 472

[445] *PL* 477

[446] *PL* 474

[447] *PL* 477

[448] *PL* 474

This vision reflects images that other characters have drawn of Isabel's situation (e.g. their house as a prison) and can be assembled to a make a more complete picture. There is still much to be clarified, above all about the woman's role in the witnessed hypothetical painting.

A vigil brings to Isabel's mind a remembered vision of the alliance between her husband and Mme Merle:

> For herself, she lingered in the soundless saloon long after the fire had gone out. There was no danger of her feeling cold; she was in a fever. She heard the small hours strike, and then the great ones, but her vigil took no heed of time. Her mind, assailed by visions, was in a state of extraordinary activity, and her visions might as well come to her there, where she sat up to meet them, and on her pillow, to make a mockery of rest. As I have said, she believed she was not defiant, and what could be a better proof of it than that she should linger there half the night, trying to persuade herself that there was no reason why Pansy shouldn't be married as you would put a letter in the post-office? When the clock struck four she got up; she was going to bed at last, for the lamp had long since gone out and the candles burned down to their sockets. But even then she stopped again in the middle of the room and stood there gazing at a remembered vision – that of her husband and Madame Merle unconsciously and familiarly associated."[449]

This is a body reaction and a mind reaction. She has incontrollable visions which activate her mind. She struggles with the question of whether she should support Pansy's marrying a lord and does not quite understand why inside of her something is hindering her. The fact that Osmond and Mme Merle share their thoughts about this matter, strongly indicates that there has to be more to their relationship than longtime friends.

Isabel never witnessed an imaginary painting of the powerful alliance between Osmond and Mme Merle (and this is not a hypothetical painting because Isabel did not look) that holds many similarities with the scene Isabel just noticed. That there was an imaginary painting of the scene recalls the fact that Isabel could have known or suspected earlier. The following imaginary painting was visible when together the two plotted Osmond's marriage with Isabel:

> The two stood there face to face; she settled her mantilla, looking down at it as she did so. 'You're looking very well,' Osmond repeated still less relevantly than before. 'You have some idea. You're never so well as when you've got an idea; they're always becoming to you.' / In the manner and tone of these two persons, on first meeting at any juncture, and especially when they met in the presence of others, was something indirect and circumspect, as if they had approached each other obliquely and addressed each other by implication. The effect of each appeared to be to intensify to an appreciable degree the self-consciousness of the other. Madame Merle of course carried off any embarrassment better than her friend; but even Madame Merle had not on this occasion the form she would have liked to have – the perfect self-possession she would have wished to wear for her host. The point to be made is, however, that at a certain moment the element between them, whatever it was, always levelled itself and left them more closely face to face than either ever as with any one else.[450]

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[449] *PL* 484

[450] *PL* 291-92

This scene also shows the two in intimacy. There is one major difference from the Awakening Conscience scene, and that is their talking on an eye level with each other. This scene is from a time when the two were equal partners in the scheming of Osmond's marriage to Isabel. Contrary to this, in in the Awakening Conscience scene, Osmond shows no respect for the woman when they are again plotting a suitable match for Osmond's family – an occupation with which they had fun the first time: "It will amuse you."[451]

The remembered vision turns into a disturbing vision in nightmares; it is an image of adultery as being omnipresent. "Sometimes, at night, she had strange visions; she seemed to see her husband and her friend – his friend – in dim, indistinguishable combination."[452] This causes her to wonder about the nature of their relationship. Isabel then establishes a link to herself and thereby lets the captured visual information get closer and closer to her. Isabel's adultery was implicit before this scene when she was faced with the expectation of having an affair with Warburton once Pansy was married to a lord, and how this would be acceptable – that is to say, a known pattern – which was, in fact, surprising to her. Adultery is an omnipresent topic – traditionally, woman is either wife and mother or mistress. Isabel falls into a depression about "this base, ignoble world" and "the stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind."[453] Isabel feels "base, vulgar, ignoble"[454] herself because she created illusionary images in the exact same way as many a naïve woman before her due to her own base and underdeveloped gaze and experience. She suddenly realizes that all women must make the same experience in marriage and that it is probably also usual to have a lover such as she could have in Warburton. Only Isabel had the illusion that a more noble union – "of great knowledge and liberty; the knowledge would give one a sense of duty and the liberty a sense of enjoyment"[455] – could be achieved in a marriage.

From her recognition of the fact that women always face the topic of adultery, a new suspicion arises: that Mme Merle's link to the family is stronger than was assumed and that she has an interest in Pansy's marriage, an interest that is a little too eager for a regular friend of the family. This suspicion is again a consequence of visions of Mme Merle: "[…] this lady's image hovered constantly before her." '"Who are you – what are you?' Isabel murmured. 'What have you to do with my husband?' […] What have you to do with me?"[456] When in the re-reading process, Isabel remembers:

> She betrayed herself to me the other day, though I did not recognize her. There appeared to have been a chance of Pansy's making a great marriage, and in her disappointment at its not coming off she almost dropped the mask.'[457]

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[451] *PL* 290

[452] *PL* 532

[453] *PL* 479

[454] *PL* 481

[455] *PL* 480

[456] *PL* 563

[457] *PL* 592

From this, Isabel realizes that Mme Merle must be under a lot of pressure and develops empathy for the woman. Isabel starts to understand not only the bond, but a change in their bond: Osmond must have lost his respect and interest in Mme Merle. Osmond must have somehow used her and is only close to her when he can benefit from her. Isabel uncovers Mme Merle's disappointment in the relationship with the man and this begins to mirror her own. Isabel feels "compassion."[458] "Poor, poor Madame Merle."[459] "Things have occurred to me, and perhaps that was what they all meant."[460] "'Ah, poor, poor woman!' cried Isabel."[461]

When Isabel meets Mme Merle the next time, which qualifies as the second Awakening Conscience scene with the mirroring delayed from the first, she already knows that Mme Merle is Pansy's mother – an information she has received from Osmond's sister, Countess Gemini. This is the first time Isabel realizes how much and how deeply other characters have an influence on her appearance in society, the image of her. It is what Pippin refers to as her "Erfahrung von Abhängigkeiten."[462] The reader follows Isabel's re-reading of her relationship with Osmond and Mme Merle. This process is chronological because Isabel reads it and reasons it out. Each confrontation reveals one piece of truth, the accumulation of which in her mind enables Isabel to face the subsequent confrontation. It is a consciousness building in steps – or cycles if we want to express it in Hegelian terms – that is exemplified here. The reader is plainly shown how this process works. It is all spelled out.

However, only when actual mirroring happens that goes beyond reasoning and when Isabel's spontaneous and incontrollable reaction to it is in the spotlight, is learning possible for the heroine. It is only then that she is forced to deal with the images she has and the ones she is confronted with. Until the moment of her mirroring with Mme Merle, she could always keep her reactions hidden. There is a lapse of time involving the decision to marry Osmond.[463] There is a lapse of time when the marriage took place and in the first year of their marriage.[464] Her crying when Goodwood challenges her to be more modern than she already is in his eyes happens in private.[465] In the mirror stage reciprocity is clearly visible.

With the "new knowledge"[466] in mind that Pansy is Mme Merle's daughter, Isabel meets the woman at the convent where Pansy was sent back, in order to say goodbye before she goes to England. She sees the following hypothetical painting:

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[458] *PL* 566

[459] *PL* 566

[460] *PL* 589

[461] *PL* 590

[462] Pippin *Moral und Moderne* 143

[463] Cf. *PL* 370

[464] Cf. *PL* 408

[465] Cf. *PL* 383

[466] PL 594

> The parlour was a vast, cold apartment, with new-looking furniture; a large clean stove of white porcelain, unlighted, a collection of wax flowers under glass, and a series of engravings from religious pictures on the walls. […] Isabel got up, expecting to see one of the ladies of the sisterhood, but to her extreme surprise found herself confronted with Madame Merle. The effect was strange, for Madame Merle was already so present to her vision that her appearance in the flesh was like suddenly, and rather awfully, seeing a painted picture move. Isabel had been thinking all day of her falsity, her audacity, her ability, her probable suffering; and these dark things seemed to flash with a sudden light as she entered the room.[467]

This setting resembles "a well-appointed prison"[468] and thereby evokes Mariana's. Then suddenly there is an Awakening Conscience moment during which Isabel can connect her vision to concrete matter in her immediate surroundings. The "sudden flicker" from the first Awakening Conscience scene is now a "flash with a sudden light." The allegorical paintings and representations of the two women yield to realist appearances. "The wonderful woman had never been so natural."[469]

> So Madame Merle went on, with much of the brilliancy of a woman who had long been a mistress of the art of conversation. […] She had not proceeded far before Isabel noted a sudden break in her voice, a lapse in her continuity, which was in itself a complete drama. This sudden modulation marked a momentous discovery – the perception of an entirely new attitude on the part of the listener. Madame Merle had guessed in the space of an instant that everything was at end between them, and in the space of another instant she had guessed the reason why. The person who stood there was not the same one she had seen hitherto, but was a very different person – a person who knew her secret. This discovery was tremendous, and from the moment she made it the most accomplished of women faltered and lost her courage. But only for that moment. Then the conscious stream of her perfect manner gathered itself again and flowed on as smoothly as might be to the end. But it was only because she had the end in view that she was able to proceed. She had been touched with a point that made her quiver, and she needed all the alertness of her will to repress her agitation. Her only safety was in her not betraying herself. She resisted this, but the startled quality of her voice refused to improve – she couldn't help it – while she heard herself say she hardly knew what. The tide of her confidence ebbed, and she was able only just to glide into port, faintly grazing the bottom.[470]

When the two women face each other (like spectator and woman of *Awakening Conscience*), they are exposed: Mme Merle sees her secret exposed and drops her mask of perfection and control and Isabel shows her awareness of having been deceived. Mme Merle's "entirely new attitude" clearly shows the turning movement towards the spectator displayed in Hunt's painting. In Mme Merle's helpless pose after seeing herself exposed by the younger lady, Isabel could see a woman relieved of the pressure of hiding a secret. Mme Merle is now ready to take penance for her behavior; and so will Isabel. Isabel will drop her mask with Ralph. His contribution is the last piece of the puzzle in Isabel's story. For the time being she continues to "repress her agitation" and does not allow herself to be seen

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[467] *PL* 595-96

[468] *PL* 595

[469] *PL* 596

[470] *PL* 598

as off guard as Mme Merle. Such a meltdown (body response) is a requirement for the shaping of a *third painting*.

3.2.3 Stage 3 – Has Isabel Become the Spectator-Painter?

Like "pieces of [a] puzzle"[471] and like the other stages, Isabel's *third painting* creation is scattered. For its identification and analysis, I was on the lookout for landscape paintings, visible through window frames. There are repeated shots through windows, the first being out of the "parlour" that forms the background of the second Awakening Conscience scene. Isabel does not actively behold this view, however, nor the following ones. Even after the second Awakening Conscience scene, she is obviously not ready to experience on a regular morning this all clarifying observation from the window. Isabel's mirror image invites a "crude light" into the scene:

> Isabel saw it all as distinctly as if it had been reflected in a large clear glass. It might have been a great moment for her, for it might have been a moment of triumph. That Madame Merle had lost her pluck and saw before her the phantom of exposure – this in itself was a revenge, this in itself was almost the promise of a brighter day. And for a moment during which she stood apparently looking out of the window, with her back half-turned, Isabel enjoyed that knowledge. On the other side of the window lay the garden of the convent; but this is not what she saw; she saw nothing of the budding plants and the glowing afternoon. She saw in the crude light of that revelation which had already become a part of experience and to which the very frailty of the vessel in which it had been offered her only gave an intrinsic price, the dry staring fact that she had been an applied handled hung-up tool, as senseless and convenient as mere shaped wood and iron. All the bitterness of this knowledge surged into her soul again; it was as if she felt on her lips the taste of dishonour. There was a moment during which, if she had turned and spoken, she would have said something that would hiss like a lash. But she closed her eyes, and then the hideous vision dropped. What remained was the cleverest woman in the world standing there within a few feet of her and knowing as little what to think as the meanest.[472]

It is not morning yet, just the "promise of a brighter day." What she sees is still a vision – a "hideous vision" this time – and as yet no clear-cut view. Isabel's awareness of being deceived strongly manifests itself before her eyes and she experiences the "frailty of the vessel" to its full extent.

Mme Merle reveals one secret more – that of Isabel's wealth that she owes to Ralph – so that "Isabel stood staring; she seemed to-day to live in a world illuminated by lurid flashes."[473] This secret could not have been revealed simply by recognizing that her initial images and understanding of situations were fragmented. "Lurid" is the light that brings this piece of consciousness which again shocks her and prompts "disconnected visions," "sudden dull gleams," and "fitful images", leaving her with "sightless eyes" for what is outside.

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[471] James *Preface* 51

[472] *PL* 598

[473] *PL* 606

> She performed this journey [back to Gardencourt] with sightless eyes and took little pleasure in the countries she traversed, decked out though they were in the richest freshness of spring. Her thoughts followed their course through other countries – strange-looking, dimly-lighted, pathless lands, in which there was no change of seasons, but only as it seemed, a perpetual dreariness of winter. She had plenty to think about; but it was neither reflexion nor conscious purpose that filled her mind. Disconnected visions passed through it, and sudden dull gleams of memory, of expectation. The past and the future came and went at their will, but she saw them only in fitful images, which rose and fell in a logic of their own. […] the truth of things, their mutual relations, their meaning, and for the most part their horror, rose before her with a kind of architectural vastness.[474]

Isabel focuses on her inner image – "memory," "expectation," "thoughts" – and prepares her understanding of how all things and characters are related. When she finally reaches Gardencourt, she does no longer knows the countryside because her not externalized inner image changes her view of the promising scenery that she perceived when first coming to England. Although "[…] to Isabel's sense, the dreariness of the world took on a [deep] tinge,"[475] she calls herself to action, realizing that "[i]t couldn't be she was to live only to suffer." [476] At Gardencourt, two mirror scenes take place. The scenes in question do not bring any more knowledge about the past to light, but help her shape her plan for the future. The confrontations are with Ralph and Goodwood.

In her last confrontation or shared moment with Ralph, Isabel manages to open up completely. The two cousins share "the knowledge that they were looking at the truth together."[477] Isabel acknowledges that her plans have failed which Ralph confirms in the following terms: "You wanted to look at life for yourself – but you were not allowed; you were punished for your wish. You were ground in the very mill of the conventional." [478] Isabel recognizes that it is precisely the conventional which she wanted to avoid which has caught her. In the farewell scene with Ralph, however, she experiences a moment of purity in human relations. It is a mirroring scene according to the model of *Adoration of the Child*. "She raised her head and her clasped hands; she seemed for a moment to pray to him." "'Oh Ralph, I'm very happy now,' she cried through her tears. 'And remember this,' he continued, 'that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel – *adored*!' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed."[479] As a consequence, she ventures to have a look outside the window for the first time:

> She was quite unable to read; her attention had never been so little at her command. One afternoon, in the library, about a week after the ceremony in the churchyard, she was trying to fix it for an hour; but her eyes often

[474] *PL* 606-7

[475] *PL* 612

[476] *PL* 607

[477] *PL* 621

[478] *PL* 622

[479] *PL* 623

> wandered from the book in her hand to the open window, which looked down the long avenue.[480]

The act of reading, which she preferred in the initial scene, is, at the moment of the disclosure of her disappointment of her initial life plans, no longer a source of light for her. From Gardencourt, she sees the "long avenue"[481] – a sign of how easy life was in Rome, and which only provides her with the view of a narrow dead-end alley. The long avenue shows that she is ready for the future.[482]

The confrontation with Goodwood helps her find a purpose again. The pensive scene Goodwood sees when Isabel is at Gardencourt after Ralph had just died shows a lack of purpose in Isabel which is precisely what she wanted to avoid and caused her to reject Goodwood in the first place.

> Her attitude had a singular absence of purpose; her hands, hanging at her sides, lost themselves in the folds of her black dress; her eyes gazed vaguely before her. […] How long she had sat in this position she could not have told you […].[483]

Compared to the previous pensive poses, especially the one in Albany, there is an awareness in her that she had assumed the pensive pose and that the pensive pose (a Mariana pose) does not lead to a purpose and satisfaction – a realization visible not to Goodwood but to the reader. She has no reason to stay any longer and should go back to Rome. The lack of purpose Goodwood detects in himself is the lack of purpose that Isabel must bear in striving for individuality and such difficult goals. After this last encounter of the two, Isabel will know what she wants; she forms a purpose right on the spot (to go back to Rome and care for Pansy). This confrontation is also a mirroring scene. Her lack of purpose is mirrored in what he expects to find when she does not marry him and what also Warburton before him admitted, namely that "[he] shall not die of it. But [he] shall do worse; [he] shall live to no purpose."[484]

Isabel knows that she does not want to end up like Mme Merle, i.e. as an instrument of Osmond and a mere product of society. Isabel has the opportunity to see what happens to a character who invests only in her appearance; she wants to avoid committing the same error. She knows that her place is with Pansy in Rome and that she can do something meaningful for the girl. She thereby carries out the *position switch* as in Dorothea's sense, namely that Isabel deepens the effect of the mirroring and actually replaces the woman of the Awakening Conscience scene at some point. This decision is Isabel's mature and modern moral decision. "She consciously chooses her own way. Warburton's and Goodwood's last efforts to capture her clearly show her that fleeing with these two men would not provide her with the freedom she now seeks. In fact, it would mean "the next thing to

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[480] *PL* 628

[481] *PL* 628

[482] In the 2003 Penguin edition, Isabel's return to Rome is clearly stated. In Campion's film, the ending is more open and a possible return only implied.

[483] *PL* 630

[484] *PL* 162

her dying."[485] Going back to Rome is her own decision. "Ihre Zukunft ist nicht rosig, aber sie wird ihre eigene sein."[486]

3.3 Isabel's Intersubjective *Third Painting*

Despite illustrating this mature decision in a picture that thus figures as her mature *Selbstbild*, the novel leaves open whether Isabel has completely transformed into a spectator-painter and thereby, whether the process was successful in her case. She never perceives Gardencourt in the morning coloring that reflects her own Awakening, as in Dorothea's case. She feels only the chill of winter, not the warmth of spring. "There was a penetrating chill in the image, and she drew back into the deepest shade of Gardencourt."[487] The "dreariness of winter"[488] might be preparing her for spring, but it is unclear if it does. Dorothea's "chill hours," in any case, were those of "morning twilight."[489] But then again, does Isabel's *third painting* have to have similarities with Dorothea's? It is Isabel's own after all. The passage in the novel which characterizes the *third painting* has to be read separately. Pictorial indicators of Dorothea's clear view of the estate helped identify the moment when Isabel comes into her third stage of the development cycle presented in the *Portrait of a Lady*.

So let us read her *third painting* separately. After her confrontation with Goodwood, Isabel walks through the darkness and turns toward the reader, not another character – the same scene as the film scene that opened this thesis.

> There were lights in the windows of the house; they shone far across the lawn. In an extraordinarily short time – for the distance was considerable – she had moved through the darkness (for she saw nothing) and reached the door. Here only she paused. She looked all about her; she listened a little; then she put her hand on the latch. She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path.[490]

Isabel moves from not seeing to knowing, from darkness to the light of clarity, from wandering around in illusionary relationships to a "straight path." This scene of realization at the door is the final threshold image: Isabel now knows where she is going; this can be read as an answer to Henrietta's question at the beginning of the novel. Windows are seen from outside. From an outside perspective – the reader's in this case – her being on the threshold can be considered her coming out of Mariana's room. What she sees and the painting she is able to create at this moment remains unknown. She could have had an outside perspective much earlier because she came from the outside and could have watched European social entanglements with a fresh perspective. However, she only reaches the threshold when it is too late for her to decide about her own representation. She is on the

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[485] *PL* 635

[486] Pippin 2004, 162

[487] *PL* 626

[488] *PL* 606

[489] *MM* 787

[490] *PL* 636

threshold and it is unclear whether she enters into a negotiation with her final representation – *her third painting*.

The final scene in a door frame with her hand on the handle is a repetition of the door scene earlier with Goodwood, when he had already tried to convince her to run away with him and when her hand did not yet display a wedding ring as in the last scene. At that earlier point, she looked at him and takes her leave.

> She had laid her hand on the knob of the door that led into her room, and she waited a moment to see whether her visitor [Goodwood] would not take his departure. […] 'I must leave you now,' said Isabel; and she opened the door and passed into the other room.[491]

In the second scene, not a former suitor, but the reader is addressed. Isabel must leave her now – with the experience that Isabel has undergone, for the reader to do with it what she wants to and can. It is an interesting thought that Isabel makes the *position switch* (which was missing with Mme Merle) with the reader, as if to mirror our reading about her lot and to run the risk of thinking that now we know how it works. The story makes very clear at this moment that the *third painting* is an intersubjective creation. It always depends on negotiations with others and the amount of clarity that Isabel can gain in this negotiation about what she wants and what is possible.

Test 1 of the model yields one main result: watching the process and learning of others does not exempt a spectator from going into the process and actively into interaction herself. It does, however, make clear what the benefit of confrontations and subsequent consciousness building is – that there is a benefit which Isabel intuitively knew when in Albany. A requirement for each individual to learn is that closeness and an individual response and one's own realism has to be established, i.e., her own re-encoding of what she sees and of what she wants to be seen is necessary. Realist art can only be realist as long as it is a goal. When reached, it is already stylized and allegorized, an archetype.[492] Adopting Dorothea's realism, therefore, does not work. A risk that it may hurt and embarrass must be taken. No experience can be anticipated, since an experience equals the externalization of inner images which can only be produced in interaction and with confrontations. Isabel's main learning is thus that the process needs to be understood. Knowing the process means to recognize that shock moments happen and it is the reaction in these moments that counts, namely that she asks herself what to do with this experience and how to gain from it. It is not about trying to avoid eye-opening confrontations which would be the equivalent of trying to hide that she wants to be different, that she has an ambition to improve, which would make the ambition ineffective altogether. Isabel realizes that it is all about learning in cycles. With each confrontation one more little piece of self-consciousness is gained. This is how her life and role can be enlarged and improvement can work. She sees this as a chance to develop and gain real knowledge, her own knowledge.

Addressing the reader, precisely invites the reader into thinking in this way and making sense of the process that is modeled as the Awakening Conscience Model in this analysis. Isabel's gaze out of the novel opens the discourse of what happens with the *third painting* after it is created as

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[491] *PL* 215

[492] Cf. Johnson 98

a harmonization of my ideals, my reality and surroundings and my experience. And it raises the question of whether it is only on the level of the reader that change can happen. Isabel is within her frames and will try to break the series of portraits created by Osmond (Mme Merle, Isabel, Pansy) the success of which is uncertain. However, the reader still has the chance to apply the process in a productive way by knowing the structure and willingly facing it. If understood properly, the reader could take away a trigger and motivation for gaze refinement from reading the novel – a goal that this analysis certainly pursues.

4 The Abstraction of the Model – I Can Break Open the Frame of Mariana's Room

The metaphor of seeing and representing continues in this later, clearly modernist, novel in the image of the Lighthouse. The beam of the lighthouse brings one slice of reality at the time into the spotlight – into a frame. Visual information is, thus, revealed in sequence and an authoritative gaze determines what the world looks like and presents only one possible appearance of the cut-out slice of reality. It offers a fragmented gaze. Lily Briscoe, who paints throughout the novel, has an artistic understanding that one should represent "not one thing, but everything" and with one represented object capture and reveal all there is to this object – "for nothing was simply one thing."[493] Lily seeks to unlock the whole potential of a "thing" and a situation. She thereby offers an alternative to the representation method of the Lighthouse beam.

Lily will serve as a lighthouse figure for my analysis of heroines who become female spectator-painters. Lily brings up the topic of the female painter who captures the world around her with her visual language and her view on reality. One could assume that she is in the third stage of the development model from the very first time we meet her. She has a blank canvas and the possibility to paint and thus re-encode what she sees around her at all times. She paints a portrait of Mrs. Ramsay and her son from a female perspective and thus offers an alternative to most male characters' images of the woman which focus solely on her beauty. Mrs. Ramsay is represented as a woman, not by means of the classical theme of Madonna and child. Lily's discourse can be read as a continuation of Henrietta's effort to re-encode Correggio's *Adoration of a Child* for Isabel. In addition to the representation of her as a classical beauty, in Lily's time there is also a suggestion of her representation in the Dutch realist style. For Lily, all suggested forms are always archaic so she creates new forms and gives her representations her signature adding her brush stroke – "a line there, in the centre."[494]

Although it might seem so, Lily does not start in Stage 3, but in Stage 1 with various unconscious inner images that trouble her view and consequently diminish the strength of her images. She has doubts about her right to exist as a painter, doubts which are constantly reinforced by philosopher Tansley who also spends the summer at the Ramsay summer home where Lily paints. Her life model presents a change to traditional roles and is challenged along with her ideas and points of view. Only when clarifying her doubts and refining her gaze will she have a voice and an artistic language with which to express herself.

4.1 The Female Spectator-Painter has Emerged

Lily starts her development process (the cycle we as readers witness) with a disappointment. This disappointment leads to her illusion. She makes the step from illusion to clear-sightedness through

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[493] *TL* 211

[494] *TL* 237

experiencing disappointment, disillusionment, and confrontation. She is disappointed in Mrs. Ramsay's way of living in that the latter willingly chooses the Mariana position that Dorothea and Isabel unwillingly fell into. Mrs. Ramsay goes as far as to fulfill it perfectly, pleasing her husband and thus strengthening not only hers but also his traditional position; this cannot be the ultimate goal of many heroines who go through processes like Dorothea and Isabel. There has to be more; there has to be a greater gain from experiences presented for posterity through development stories such as Dorothea's and Isabel's. In Lily's development process, she will have to learn what is involved in making the decision to live the way Mrs. Ramsay does, and how great the temptation of a traditional life is.

Lily's illusion is three-fold: 1) She is convinced that modern women no longer wish to play a role such as this, investing all their potential in the service of husband and children. 2) She underestimates the strong appeal of such a life and safe position – an appeal she eventually also feels herself. 3) Lily's third illusion is that it is possible for her to record an illusion of somebody else (Mrs. Ramsay, in this case) and thus externalize that person's inner images. Lily's story is about her own development process, not about the woman's that she paints. She can only externalize her own inner images and she will. By painting she records her Impulses; that is to say, how she processes what she sees and negotiates a representation with herself and other characters. She makes public what is going on inside her and thus lays strong emphasis on a woman's inner life.

Lily, William Bankes, and Mrs. Ramsay all appear in Mariana moments. What is new is that a man is also presented in the Mariana pose. The three characters seem to be doom themselves to a passive state:

> Lily felt that something was lacking; Mr Bankes felt that something was lacking. Pulling her shawl round her, Mrs Ramsay felt that something was lacking. All of them bending themselves to listen thought, 'Pray heaven that the inside of my mind may not be exposed' […].[495]

All are in a passive pose, and then Lily escapes from a passive state and becomes active. Mrs. Ramsay and William share some knowledge of a lack in their lives, i.e., in the representations that their positions bring forth, but are inactive, remaining silent. They do not want to expose their ideas to examination and thus cannot promote change, even though "[William] felt come over him the disagreeableness of life, sitting there, waiting."[496] The three characters feel they are in a position of waiting: "One was always waiting for the man. There was always a chance. At any moment the leader might arise […]"[497] They leave the spotlight to men, but are unfulfilled and "bored"[498] (in Mrs. Ramsay's case), or "jealous"[499] (in William Bankes's case). The pictorial elements that evoke *Mariana* are the tablecloth with a leaf pattern and the excessive waiting for the husband in the following scene. It is the scene that displays Mrs. Ramsay's illusion and which Lily knows well:

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[495] *TL* 108

[496] *TL* 108

[497] *TL* 109

[498] *TL* 108

[499] *TL* 109

> Lily looked at the leaf of the table-cloth; [Is it Mariana's?] and Mrs Ramsay, leaving the argument entirely in the hands of the two men, wondered why she was so bored with this talk, and wished, looking at her husband at the other end of the table, that he would say something. […] Then, realizing that it was because she admired him so much that she was waiting for him to speak, she felt as if somebody had been praising her husband to her and their marriage, and she glowed all over without realizing that it was she herself who had praised him. [500]

Mrs. Ramsay praises her husband and she wants her husband to see that she obediently plays the role of the ideal wife.

> She looked at him thinking to find this shown on his face; he would be looking magnificent …. But not in the least. He was screwing his face up, he was scowling and frowning, and flushing with anger. […] She saw his anger fly like a pack of hounds into his eyes, his brow, and she knew that in a moment something violent would explode […]. He said nothing, he would have her observe. […] he had controlled himself, Mr Ramsay would have her watch. […] Everybody could see, Mrs Ramsay thought. […] Why could he never conceal his feelings? Mrs Ramsay wondered, and she wondered why Augustus Carmichael had noticed. Perhaps he had; perhaps he had not. She could not help respecting the composure with which he sat there, drinking his soup. If he wanted, he asked for soup. Whether people laughed at him or were angry with him he was the same. He did not like her, she knew that; but partly for this reason she respected him and looking at him, drinking soup, very large and calming in the failing light, and monumental, and contemplative, she wondered what he did feel then, and why he was always content and dignified; […] 'Poor old Augustus – he's a true poet,' which was high praise from her husband.[501]

Mrs. Ramsay enacts the part of the ideal wife and, at the same time, wants him to play the role of the ideal husband, without showing any emotions and human traits on his face, but displaying a perfect composure of her ideal. She wants him to look "very large and calm" and "monumental." Compared to the two previous novels, this is a radicalization of the two wives' choices of their husbands in terms of classical, allegorical symbolism, instead of a realist appraisal and representation of the two male characters. Mrs. Ramsay, namely, openly states this and is fully aware of this fact. Mrs. Ramsay does not want to be different which, for a woman of her time means that she wants to fit into the frames and frameworks that allegorical and idealized imagery suggest. For this idealization of the husband, the wife also uses descriptions such as "monumental," "large," and pompous visual language. Although she does not feel respect and awe with regard to her husband's art or science – Augustus, who to her is the classical figure of high prestige, she respects much more – she does not say so because she knows that her husband needs her sympathy. As long as the husbands are not challenged, they still represent their wives in terms of classical and, generally-speaking, allegorical paintings. Lily knows that a change needs to happen, which neither William, nor Mrs. Ramsay will produce (he is not active and she likes her position as her husband's wife and will not endanger it). The wife's ready-made plan to idealize and therefore curtail the images of other characters was known from the husbands, now it comes from the wife. Such practices as were carried out by the earlier wives were only implied. This

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[500] *TL* 109-10

[501] *TL* 109-11

raises the question of the responsibility that women carry to be able to see and suggest new forms; otherwise not only will they stay in the same position but so will their husbands, and change does not occur. Moreover, by putting a man in the Mariana pose (William), Woolf opens up the topic of the waiting pose and troubled seeing in terms of a general human question.

Lily wants change and she is the only character who can drive it. She wants to uncover Mrs. Ramsay's illusion that the life of a traditional wife allows her to be modern and that to put her own potential behind that of her husband is what a modern wife should do. Lily is convinced that a woman can have her own voice and make a contribution to matrimony and society. The young woman will find out in the course of the novel that it is her own illusion which she needs to uncover in order to promote a more self-conscious and active image of women. Her painting and her attempt to capture the potential in Mrs. Ramsay that this woman does not exploit, and which at first does not work, reveals Lily's illusion that she is in the third stage already (she has a blank canvas after all). She tries to be the spectator-painter from the very beginning and intends to continuously record what her alternative or complementary representation of the characters and situations is. A high and worthy ambition for oneself is the driving force, as is the knowledge of how to see an ambition through. Lily can only paint when she has her own ambition and develops this through her painting. She eventually becomes aware that she needs to create a *Selbstbild* and the creation of the self-image is a negotiation with the image of others. The process of externalizing her inner image and creating compositions from Mariana's three layers is visualized, not simply reasoned out anymore.

I will distinguish between two main directions in the discussion of Lily's painting: Dutch realism vs. a group of art tendencies of the 19th and early 20th century reflecting innovative and revolutionary forces. Classical or high Renaissance paintings do not appear in this novel. Non-specific allegorized and classical symbols are referred to when it comes to describing Mrs. Ramsay in terms of – and only in terms of – her beauty. Woolf picks up and makes even plainer the formalism and normative aspect of Dutch realist art – still lifes and a dinner scene – believing that Dutch realism best characterizes a strongly regulated art, but also a deep and rich one if observed properly. In the novel, the realist paintings stand for conventions and commonly agreed upon rules. The innovative paintings include an Impressionist and a Cubist discourse. Lily experiments with both tendencies and thus challenges realist tendencies. Impressionism mainly emerges when she looks at nature and realizes the power that does not come out in all portraits. She additionally uses cubist language when she tries to capture the essence of Mrs. Ramsay for her portrait and chooses, for instance, triangular shapes. Lily's painting development goes from recognizing the full potential of inner life in nature objects or people to being able to grasp this and represent it with a brush. Her portrait of Mrs. Ramsay has abstract characteristics, showing the two innovative approaches of Impressionism and Cubism which reflect Lily's choice to be unconventional.

Lily is unconventional and gains certain acceptance by the end of the novel. I will argue that she finds a way to live her ideals and harmonize them with what is possible in society. Moreover, I will show that Lily realizes that finding one's own way is a battle for all subjects in society, not just for women. *To the Lighthouse* is a continuation and modernization, in the sense of appropriation, of *Middlemarch*. In order to be read as such, an awareness of *The Portrait of a Lady* and the experience

of Isabel's struggle with conventionality is necessary. Her position as female painter and of being unconventional is constantly and strongly marked by her painting; she wants to capture that there is more in women than the traditional role would suggest and there is room for women to express themselves. Lily emerges as the female spectator-painter during the novel and her development process. In this she resembles Dorothea and Isabel. The radical aspect of her story is that she is, in fact, a painter by profession. With this she emphasizes that the third stage, the *third painting*, has to be created, by each individual for each individual development process. She justifies that the visualization of Stage 3 is a blank canvas; it is a spectator-painter's blank canvas on which draw both her experience and conclusions. By painting, Lily creates and develops her gaze and artistic competence. No pre-determined painting serves for the representation and development of an individual's experience. All that is adopted *per se* is archaic already and only foments a spectator's illusions.

Lily's attempt at representation requires its own artistic language. If artistic creation stands for an individual's expression in general, accepting existing forms will not help her negotiate images with herself and other characters. Realist painting becomes archaic when it is no answer to idealized and thus powerless representation, but simply the standard about which everyone orients herself. Lily has her three layers to negotiate and to bring into a composition in order to get her own *third painting*. The layer of the nature picture behind Mariana's religious painting window is what Lily sees in her actuality. It has to be her own realism and does not necessarily have to be realist art, as in Dorothea's case. Creating art form the three layers of an idealized, a realist, and an inner image which goes back to a Pre-Raphaelite idea of art, is Lily's task (and the task of every character who goes through the modeled development process); the characters' three layers and *third paintings* might have different faces, but the mechanics of the process remain the same.

In Lily's case, Dutch realist art is what all the characters as a group create and which logically stands for idealized and pre-determined symbolism. Representing the group, Mrs. Ramsay, together with Augustus Carmichael, produce a still life painting and a dinner scene in the style of old Dutch masters (or 19th-century adaptations of the same genre). The following painting is created right after it becomes clear that Mrs. Ramsay wants to maintain conventions and existing forms.

> Now eight candles were stood down the table, and after the first stoop the flames stood upright and drew with them into visibility the long table entire, and in the middle a yellow and purple dish of fruit. What had she done with it, Mrs Ramsay wondered, for Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears, of the horny pink-lined shell, of the bananas, made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet, of the bunch that hangs with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus (in some picture), among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold…. Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed possessed of great size and depth, was like a world in which one could take one's staff and climb up hills, she thought, and go down into valleys, and to her pleasure (for it brought them into sympathy momentarily) she saw that Augustus too feasted his eyes on the same plate of fruit, plunged in, broke off a bloom there, a tassel

> here, and returned, after feasting, to his hive. That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them. [502]

"Looking together" makes the scene a commonly acknowledged form of representation that includes all the spectators, i.e., all the characters around the dinner table. "Rose's arrangement" could be a still life painting in the 17th-, 18th-, or 19th-century tradition. It starts out as one that could look like the following:

Figure 15 ***Still Life with Grapes, Peaches, an Orange and a Pear*** **by Willem Verbeet[503]**

Mrs. Ramsay's version has an exotic quality evoked by the bananas and Romantic traits evoked by the mention of Neptune and the depth and grandeur of the sea. Her view reflects the appreciative view of still life in the 19th and early 20th century which praised the depth of truth in ordinary objects. The visible elements trigger imagination. They have greatness and depth and all comes together in a bowl of fruit, visible and accessible for all. Intangible inner life is thus brought into a comprehensible form. About Virginia Woolf's attitude towards Dutch realism, Gruber has this to say:

> The beauty of a well served dinner, Virginia Woolf finds can be as profound as the beauty of a sunset. The composition of a bowl of fruit, the possibilities of which had been recognized as a rich subject for painting, may obtain as well for literary description. The long traditions of household cares had made her sensitive to apparently insignificant objects. As much emotion may be aroused through the position of a fork beside a napkin, as much nervousness or satisfaction as through the position of a tree against the sky. Design is everywhere, even the patterns of food may be symbolic of the accidents of life. […] The order experienced in life as prearranged, imposes itself conceptually upon a woman's arrangement of the table. There is an awakening of the human dispensation of trifling objects, reflecting the superhuman structure of the universe.
>
> The contemporary interest in formalism, seen as the relationship of shapes, often selects, the unimportant or the extraordinary for material and gives them new values. Seeking a flexibility between style and thought, tradition and experiment, Virginia Woolf combines her old rhetorical standards with

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[502] *TL* 111-12

[503] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.artnet.com/artists/willem-verbeet/still-life-with-grapes-peaches-an-orange-and-aa-r-KvN3T-hRnhe3I9ZhBETg2>

> which she had sung of nature, with this new structural formalism explicit of her interest in still-life.[504]

According to Woolf, realism has the power to create truthful and rich representation, but only if it triggers the interest to see. Mrs. Ramsay creates with this still-life scene "formal satisfaction, indigenous of this age, [supplemented] with the Romantic associations typical of her style." [505] The true poet Carmichael can also see magnitude in the ordinary, because poets "used to seek [aesthetic gratification] in the woods at the side of a lake." [506] It is not that the characters do not recognize inner life in the pre-arranged forms of realism, but they stick with commonly arranged forms and do not choose individual forms of representation which would be a sign of truly dealing with what they see. Choosing a form means to understand and process.

The still-life scene flows over into a party scene, presumably also of a Dutch realist style at first that diffuses into Romantic or Impressionist inner life quality and thus poses the question of in what way Dutch realist visual language captures and reveals the potential of inner life. The fact that it does seems to be clear to Woolf:

> Now all the candles were lit, and the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candle light, and composed, as they had not been in the twilight, into a party round a table, for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily.[507]

The warmth of the candle light and illuminated faces describe an appealing dinner scene in which the static quality of the appearance is clearly visible, like "masks." It is a light that stands for order and clarity. It forms the group and separates this illuminated scene inside from the non-representational dark outside. The characters are a community, with the same, agreed-on rules and values that unite them. Neither of the characters fail to notice that there is a powerful life outside. But they agree not to care. This is the way that the novel discusses the danger of idealizing limiting quality as well as realist paintings. Mrs. Ramsay as spectator sees the greatness in the ordinary but does not enhance her ordinary life with this.

Lily, who is also a spectator of the above scene, feels the need for change because the scene is not fully representational for her, i.e., the potential of the scene is not used. It can be considered a conspiracy by all the characters represented that they call what they have the entire actuality and truth. They claim their painting to be a realist painting that represents the objective truth and shows how to keep rules and order intact. Night, which stands for the outside where there is no order, was previously shut off. A reflection of the 'off,' the outside, is a common theme and always present in Dutch realist paintings.[508] Lily sees that

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[504] Gruber 124

[505] Gruber 124

[506] Gruber 124

[507] *TL* 112

[508] Cf. Stoichita 16

> [s]ome change at once went through them all, as if this had really happened, and they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; had their common cause against that fluidity out there. Mrs Ramsay, who had been uneasy, waiting for Paul and Minta to come in, and unable, she felt, to settle to things, now felt her uneasiness changed to expectation. For now they must come, and Lily Briscoe, trying to analyse the cause of the sudden exhilaration, […] when solidity suddenly vanished, and such vast spaces lay between them; and now the same effect was got by the many candles in the sparely furnished room, and the uncurtained windows, and the bright mask-like look of faces seen by the candle-light. Some weight was taken off them; anything might happen, she felt.[509]

Like Mrs. Ramsay before her, Lily senses that if the forms, frames, and "solidity" go away, there is chaos and "anything might happen." There is no control anymore by the party, community, convention. This discourse shows that *startlers* in representations have become common knowledge. However, sudden changes scare or annoy Mrs. Ramsay; she prefers "masks" and control of emotions. Sudden changes and the proof of the pulse of life, the influence of time and light on an appearance, and emotions that are on the surface impress Lily and trigger her interest to pursue this incontrollable element and "analyse [its] cause." Her interest in the instability of a seemingly stable view feels much like an Impressionist approach. The young woman's intuitive search for a truer and, to her, more realist form of representation is similar to the realists' concern in comparison with allegorical religious paintings.

Woolf's remarks on Eliot's realism echoes Impressionism by calling to mind what the initial intention of realism was, namely a rejection of the idealized and remote from actually religious and otherwise allegorical paintings towards a presentation of the essence of the ordinary that is as close to an objectively perceived model in nature and offers as much detail as possible. The search for a truer representation for Woolf is no longer in painting the most precise details, which rather restrict a represented item to symbols (allegorical because commonly acknowledged as the convention), but to foster an artistic language that gives room for the flexibility in an appearance due to the influence of light and wind and all influencing factors that cause changes on a surface. Booth explains that

> […] Lewes and Eliot as well as Woolf considered mere detail to be vulgar materialism. Lewes claimed that realism had become a fad for unessential detail, coats and waistcoats, and bourgeois manners, delight[ing] the tailor-mind […], much as Woolf was later to censure the writers who outfitted life like Bond Street tailors […]. Not that Woolf despised factual detail in fiction […]. She admired truth tellers like Defoe, with their version of Dutch realism, and savored the precise delineation of personal relations in Jane Austen, but she regarded such realism as too transparent. Instead, George Eliot according to Woolf developed the intrusive omniscient narrator who alerts the reader that the end of life is not to meet, to part, to love, to laugh, revealing instead a hidden consciousness that runs counter to the surface […]. Instead of a colored superficies, we have subversive psychological depth and an ambition to encompass all of life; Woolf's own fiction would represent those overpowering forces, not just marriage and manners.[510]

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[509] *TL* 112-13

[510] Booth 112

The Realism that a novel should produce is the one that appeals individually and induces an individual response. Realism with too much detail foments the "solidity" of the surface which represses response and emotions.

For trying to document emotions and changes in the characters' appearance, as well as for questioning the necessity to repress emotions given by Realism, Lily opens up the world of Impressionism in the novel and lets the reader experience her psychological response – an aspect that was still restricted in Victorian art (and Dutch realism).

> The nineteenth-century novelists might be seen as having made the first assaults on the mystery of the ordinary mind on an ordinary day […] without having made full allowance for the astonishing disorder of the inner life as Woolf and other Georgians sought to do […]. Though Eliot can be seen as a pioneer of psychoanalysis, she exhibits a Victorian reticence, out of piety and fellow feeling for our common nature […]. Such tact can be a handicap; Woolf herself felt the restraints of Victorian decorum. […]
>
> The realism of a Dutch painter and that of an impressionist thus differs somewhat […]. If Eliot admits the mirror is doubtless defective […], she nonetheless offers a framed representation. For Woolf, the romantic faith in correspondences, how beauty outside mirrors beauty within, has been irreparably shattered […]. Woolf had merely taken the next logical step in questioning mimetic art, without abandoning the aim of representing reality as she knew it in order to rouse the readers' sympathetic awareness of common experience.[511]

In other words, realism is effective if the essence of represented objects is perceived, which is a question of the spectator and the valuation of the object and the spectator's capability of getting more out of the seen by understanding the influence of her inner images on the seen and detecting the inner images of the object. If perceived it can also be represented; but how?

Impressionism appealed to Woolf precisely because it deals with the question of how change and movement and unfixedness can be represented in art. For her, this is realism. For her, Impressionism goes along with the idea that realism is not just there, but needs to be detected and thus produced by the observer. According to Arnason,

> realism rested not so much in the simple objective nature of the natural phenomena – in mountains or trees, or human beings or pots of flowers – as in the eye of the spectator. Landscape and its sea, sky trees, and mountains in actuality could never be static and fixed. It was a continuously changing panorama of light and shadow, of moving clouds and reflections on the water.[512]

The psychology of the spectator brings forth even more from the seen than an objective representation ever could. Lily is more conscious of herself than the earlier heroines and can be trusted with the task of creating as truthful a representation of Mrs. Ramsay, and with it herself, as possible. Thus Impressionism can be viewed "as a new and elegant expansion of realism."[513]

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[511] Booth 113

[512] Arnason 21-22

[513] Torgovnick 3

The first Impressionists tried out what it meant to paint in an Impressionist style. They first knew what they did not want and had to develop what they did want. They knew

> wohin es sie nicht ziehen würde: *Nicht* zu einer meistenteils antike römische oder griechische Mythologie und Geschichte darstellenden Malerei des Idealismus oder Klassizismus, wie sie von der staatlichen Kunstakademie gepredigt wurde, *nicht* zu einer reiner Ateliermalerei, wo doch das Malen ‚en plein air' (unter freiem Himmel) immer mehr praktiziert wurde, nicht zu einer Kunst, die fern […] des Alltags ihrer eigenen Zeit angesiedelt war.[514]

Impressionism can be considered a new frame – a softer, more flexible one – that replaces the previously existing frame of realism. The Barbizon School is considered a starting point of Impressionist landscape paintings,[515] a different visual language that emerges out of the previous one.

In Dorothea's case, we already had an example of an art discourse that experimented with new techniques that negotiate, and sometimes negate, realism and idealized painting: it was Pre-Raphaelism. This experimenting and finally bringing into a composition of various concerns, stands for the harmonization of Mariana's three layers in this analysis. Victorian art was still too restricting and did not satisfy Woolf to serve as an illustration of Lily's growing as an artist. In Impressionism (and other innovative tendencies to which I will come back shortly), we have another such experimenting and negotiating artistic tendency. "Nur scheinbar handelt es sich um eine nichtsubversive Strömung der Malerei: Die Impressionisten lehnten viele akademische Konventionen ab, und die konservativen Kritiker sahen in ihren Werken zu Recht einen Angriff auf die Tradition"[516] – just like Pre-Raphaelism a few years before that. Whereas the Pre-Raphaelites tried to capture the depth and multilayered reality with glazes of brilliance, the Impressionists used the play with light and shadow and blurred outlines – "Techniken, die dem Festhalten des Augenblicks dienten."[517]

> [Sie wollten] die malerischen Mittel und deren Möglichkeiten, Sinneseindrücke wiederzugeben, erforschen und Licht, Farbe und Bewegung auf die Leinwand zu bringen. Sie trugen die Farben in lockeren, einzelnen Pinselstrichen auf und verwendeten hellere und leuchtendere Farben als die akademischen Maler. In dem aus künstlerischer Ernsthaftigkeit erwachsenden Spiel mit flüchtigen Wahrnehmungen entfernten sie sich von der traditionellen Perspektive und Bildgestaltung.[518]

I will name two examples of Impressionist paintings to show the play of light on a surface as well as the invigorating effect of blurred outlines, which is very typical of Impressionism. These two paintings are not evoked in the novel. They merely enable me to show how Impressionists tried to capture movement and momentary impressions in their paintings.[519] The first is Monet's *Portrait de Camille au Bouquet de Violettes* (cf. Figure 16). It shows that outlines are not clear-cut and colors inside correspond with colors that are supposedly outside; similarly, the border between the nature and

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[514] Kropmanns "Vom Realismus zum Impressionismus" 18

[515] Cf. Kropmanns "Schule von Barbizon" 36

[516] Little 84

[517] Little 85

[518] Little 84

[519] Cf. Little 85

indoor scene is not clear-cut. A breeze through the open window can be assumed. The second is Renoir's *Ball in Moulin de la Galette* (cf. Figure 17) where the play of light and shadow becomes clear. The figures actually seem to be dancing.

Figure 16 *Portrait de Camille au Bouquet de Violettes* by Claude Monet[520]

Figure 17 *Ball in Moulin de la Galette* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir[521]

Impressionism is the first art tendency that helps illustrate Lily's negotiation and image creation, i.e., her composition created out of Mariana's three layers. Her composing has similarities with Dorothea's but takes the discourse into another century by applying a fragmentation, rather than a layering approach. In addition, whereas Dorothea re-encoded a nature scene, Lily goes a step further and experiments with a portrait. She applies impressionist nature study to portraiture. As we will see, Impressionism does not give Lily all the visual language she needs for her artistic expression. Portraits that aim at impressionist depth and flexibility on the surface multiply complexity: a truthful

[520] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.paintingmania.com/portrait-de-camille-au-bouquet-de-violettes-7_19372.html>

[521] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <https://the-artinspector.de/galerie/pierre-auguste-renoir-bal-du-moulin-de-la-galette>

representation of a character also includes the impressions this character has of other characters and situations which equals multiple sight lines and degrees of concreteness of matter. To achieve the task of creating a truthful portrait in this sense, Lily experiments with more innovative methods than Dorothea. The trying out of various artistic languages is a careful study of what it means to represent, capture, and create.

Impressionism was one of the first experimental art tendencies of a series of very innovative tendencies in the late 19th century and early 20th century. According to Torgovnick, Woolf was very interested in innovations in art and this made her refer more often to these innovations than Henry James who was a modernist, but was nevertheless relatively traditional:

> The relative absence of a full grounding in the traditional forms of art constitutes, then, a significant difference between Woolf's involvement with the visual arts and those of James […]. She of course knew the Old Masters and was even shown some of them on trips with cognoscenti like Roger Fry, but her deepest, most basic sense of art was of the art championed by Bloomsbury [the artistic group to which Virginia and her sister Vanessa belonged] and practiced by her sister – twentieth century art, rooted in the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and advancing eagerly into Cubism, abstraction, and other innovations.[522]

The Bloomsbury group "rejected conventions of Victorian life"[523] and looked for ways to renew cultural dictum and art. I will show that beside Impressionism, traces of Cubism can certainly be found in *To the Lighthouse* as well and that it is, to a great degree, the Cubist traces that facilitate Lily's image negotiation and creation.

Cubism applies abstract and innovative methods.[524] It breaks open the conventions of realism and claims to be more realist and to better reveal the essence of actuality. Cubism is characterized by three aspects: First of all, it challenges traditional perspective: "Der Kubismus stellte Gegenstände simultan aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven dar. […] Die Kubisten versuchten, alle diese unterschiedlichen Blickwinkel gleichzeitig auf die Leinwand zu bringen. Daher kann der malerische Ansatz des Kubismus auch als konzeptionell bezeichnet werden."[525] Second, cubism breaks open existing forms and creates something that is not recognizable all at once, that does not have the "economy of picture." Objects are divided into their smallest unit of meaning – often geometric forms and shapes – and those parts are re-assembled. Third, by the use of geometric forms and an emphasis on the graphical appearance (shapes and lines) that are brought into two dimensions, simplification and reduction is aimed at so that the third dimension is reduced and the relationship among the shapes and forms highlighted. In summary, in Cubism, the focus is laid on

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[522] Torgovnick 61-2

[523] Lee 54

[524] I will focus on the analytical cubism and one that always keeps traces of representational art (no complete dissolution).

[525] Little 106

aesthetics and paintings are not merely created to trigger associations in the mind of the spectator. An object should represent not only what the human mind can think of, "not one thing, but everything."[526]

By means of relieving an object of known and recognizable forms, the essence of the represented object is taken and a unique form for it developed. The realism that has become archaic is extracted; true realism only exists if understood by the spectator and if there is a contribution by the spectator. If recognizable forms are used, what is seen is always immediately replaced by known images; what is seen is then always fiction. Abstract artists want to avoid this and try to represent the unconscious, what one does not yet know, to make the spectator look closely, to keep up spectator's interest in painting.[527] The freeing of known forms to reveal the essence is the goal of all abstract art. It exemplifies what a spectator needs to do when wanting to look with more depth. "...reduction opened up possibilities that inclusiveness did not have. From a few things, you get everything."[528] As we will see, this is what Lily insists on: to get to the essence. What "she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything."[529]

Figure 18 *Portrait of a Woman* by Picasso[530]

An explanation by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston of *Portrait of a Woman* by Picasso (cf. Figure 18) introduces the Cubist concepts of dissolution, while still observing the maintenance of forms, the

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[526] *TL* 211

[527] cf. Audio Guide to *Gumball XI* by Charles Bell, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung "Realismus"

[528] Hustvedt 132

[529] *TL* 220

[530] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/portrait-of-a-woman-34245>

use of basic elements for visual expression, and the development of a new order in the represented object – a new grid:

> Cubism, the watershed style invented by Picasso and Georges Braque, created a new and ambiguous relationship between three-dimensional form and the flat surface of the canvas. In austere, monochrome paintings, Picasso dissolved the language of pictorial representation into its basic elements of line, light, and shade, creating a subtly shifting grid that animates the entire canvas. The figure merges with the ground, but never entirely vanishes. Such clues as the hair at top left and the long face identify this portrait, while the right angles rising up in the background may represent paintings stacked against the studio wall.[531]

I would like to add a Braque painting (cf. Figure 19) that includes the motive of the lighthouse and is somewhat closer to the world of colors developed in *To the Lighthouse*. It is an outside scene which introduces views onto the bay that are very present in the novel, beside the portraits.

Figure 19 *Harbor in Normandy* by Braque[532]

However, both paintings do not completely show the colors Virginia Woolf used for the evoked paintings in the novel. For her choice of colors, she more likely went back to Impressionist imagery and/or is influenced by the Cubist paintings made by her sister Vanessa Bell, such as the following ones, which are not evoked in the novel either, but would fit better into the scenery of the Ramsay summer home (cf. Figure 20 and Figure 21).

[531] Artists Rights Society (ARS) par. 1

[532] Idea to include this painting adopted from and painting retrieved from Dias 28

Figure 20 *Still Life on Corner of a Mantelpiece* by Vanessa Bell[533]

Figure 21 *Molly McCarthy* by Vanessa Bell[534]

[533] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bell-still-life-on-corner-of-a-mantelpiece-t01133>

[534] Retrieved 30 Oct 2016 from <http://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/radical-bloomsbury-the-art-of-duncan-grant-and-vanessa-bell--1905-1925>

Cubist theory is suitable to discuss a painter's attempt at creating something new. Cubism can be described as follows:

> [Die Malerei unserer Zeit] ward lyrisch. Die reine, hohe Freude an der Schönheit der Dinge ist ihr Ansporn… Sie will sie fassen in der Einheit des Kunstwerks. Damit ist das Wesen der neuen Malerei deutlich gekennzeichnet als darstellend und aufbauend zugleich. Darstellend: will sie doch die Formenschönheit der Dinge wiedergeben. Aufbauend: will sie doch die diese Formenschönheit im Gemälde begreifen. Darstellung und Aufbau wiederstreiten sich. […] / Unter Lyrismus verstand [man] eine neue formale Geschlossenheit, eine neu gewonnene Eigengesetzlichkeit und Eigenständigkeit des Kunstwerks.[535]

I will investigate Lily's painting for Cubist traces precisely because I want to see if she can achieve a self-conscious painting with its own system of order and because cubist *pictorial indicators* appear repeatedly in her explanation of her painting. Her mention of triangular shapes and lines strongly evoke Cubist visual language although this tendency might not be the only one she experiments with: The subject of Lily's painting, Mrs. Ramsay, is "to Lily's eyes, an august shape; the shape of a dome,"[536] "the triangular purple shape;"[537] this and her own description of "her picture […] with all its […] lines running up and across, its attempt at something"[538] will be read in terms of Cubism in this analysis. Her picture consists of remembered scenes that Lily makes sense of while painting her abstract painting. Lily tries to paint Mrs. Ramsay when she is absent (dead already) and thus facilitates a discussion that the forms are not the object – they are just shadows of what is the truthful core of the object.

Abstract art raises the consciousness of matter and material. The medium with which the painter works is strongly emphasized, since it reflects a conscious choice of material and does not implement any existing rules.[539] Existing rules need to be known to realize that they cannot be merely copied in an individual, self-conscious creation. In abstract art the experimentation aspect is in focus. Watching an abstract painter and reading an abstract painting thus means to deal with matter, i.e., with all the instruments that are at one's disposal for representation. In a figurative sense, this dealing with material means to deal with what is feasible and can be brought into execution and existence – the establishment of its own systems and framework conditions. In such a procedure, the highest attentiveness and involvement is asked of both an artist and the observers of artworks.

By omitting known shapes and re-assembling the smallest components of a subject in a unique way, no logical and immediately understandable sequence of objects and events can be detected. Looking automatically turns into reading. In other words, regarding Cubist art requires the ability to read meaning into what is seen and interpret accordingly. In painting and in writing, the

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[535] Dittmann 401 (p. 1 in scanned pdf)

[536] *TL* 60

[537] *TL* 61

[538] *TL* 237

[539] Torgovnick 65

technique of using this kind of disorientation to get higher spectator/reader involvement can be applied:

> […] both art and literature may have shown to have experimented with multiple points of view: Cubism in the visual arts, for example, and the technique of multiple narrators in novels like William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. […] [A]nalogous effects include the complex manipulation of time in the first two sections of *To the Lighthouse* and the more radical disorientations implicit in the work of writers like Getrude Stein. [540]

"Manipulations" in a representation, as the individualize forms of representations are called in this quote, teach the spectator that no representation is a given. Virginia Woolf knew this practice. It is "abstract art of the kind that Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant knew and sometimes painted, of the kind that […] takes us out of the 'sequence' and into abstract, meditative states of mind […]."[541] If there is no mimetic representation, then a window to the mental images, the inner images, is opened. "Picasso said 'I paint forms as I think of them, not as I see them' which resulted in objects and sitters portrayed in a fragmented manner […]."[542] Each spectator reveals his perspectives by reading and also creating a painting. In this manner, multiplied meaning is produced – and always freshly produces – before being curtailed into existing forms. "[…] mental 'pictures' become in *To the Lighthouse* a way of defining experience, of knowing others; these 'pictures' thus approach perceptual uses of pictorialism."[543]

Order needs to be given and a "sequence" found by the spectator in abstract art. By this practice, individual compositions and readings come into being. Abstract art can be considered subjective, not generally acknowledged realism, and the practice of finding a logic in the seen equals finding one's own realism. Gertrude Stein explains this matter of fact when describing Picasso (in contrast to realist painter Courbet):

> Ich bin immer ganz verblüfft von Courbets Landschaften, weil er die Farben nicht zu ändern braucht, um das Abbild der Natur so zu geben, wie jeder sie sieht. Aber Picasso war nicht so; wenn er eine Tomate ass, war die Tomate nicht jedermanns Tomate, ganz und gar nicht, und er bemühte sich nicht, die Dinge auf seine Weise so auszudrücken, wie jedermann sie sieht, sondern das Ding so auszudrücken, wie er es sah. Van Gogh war selbst in seinen phantastischen Augenblicken, sogar als er sich das Ohr abschnitt, überzeugt, dass ein Ohr ein Ohr ist, wie jeder es sehen konnte; das Bedürfnis nach dem Ohr mochte verschieden sein, aber das Ohr war das gleiche, das jeder sehen konnte. Bei Picasso hingegen, der ja Spanier ist, war es ganz anders. Nun ja, Don Quichotte war Spanier, er bildete sich die Dinge nicht ein, er sah die Dinge, und es war kein Traum, es war kein Wahn, er sah sie wirklich. / Und Picasso ist Spanier.[544]

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[540] Torgovnick 9

[541] Torgovnick 136

[542] Johnson par. 2

[543] Torgovnick 137

[544] Stein 31-2

> Das ist akademisches Denken, es ist nicht zeitgenössisch, natürlich nicht, und so kann es nicht schöpferisch sein, weil sich nur das Zeitgenössische im schöpferischen Menschen schöpferisch auswirkt. Natürlich.[545]

Don Quixote is no longer used as a symbol of someone who creates illusions, but someone who has the creative power to shape appearances and the way one is perceived. In the same way, Lily can only be creative if she is in her actuality using tools that she in her time has at her disposal. That is her "natural" creation, her realism.

4.2 "Das Schöpferische des Zeitgenössischen"[546] – Lily's Painting

The negotiation of realist and impressionist tendencies describes in what way Lily distinguishes herself from two other female characters in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay and Minta, as the only one with a "will to create in a woman."[547] Her distinction is, in a sense, a negotiation as well. In order to see how Lily's ambition differs from the two other female characters, the three ambitions are sketched in the following as a deduction from their reactions to the Dutch realist scene described in the previous sub-section. This scene is adequate for the study of the three female characters' ambitions, because it is at that moment that Lily senses unnamable elements in the scene and decides to do something with this dormant knowledge, whereas Mrs. Ramsay lets it slip by and Minta misses it altogether.

The three female characters are the spectators of the Dutch realist scene previously described: it is a hypothetical painting only for Mrs. Ramsey and Lily, not so for Minta who does not pay any attention. Mrs. Ramsay's description of the scene before Lily feels the 'change' that goes through all the characters in the scene maintains the potential of a more complete and refined representation within – potential that can be unlocked. Mrs. Ramsay admired the depth of the realist paintings, but, like 19th-century novelists (according to Woolf) does not tap into the full potential of this depth. She adopted a passive attitude beforehand, and falls into it again, right after feeling the "aesthetic gratification."[548] . During the entire Dutch realist scene that turns into a scene with Impressionist characteristics, she is waiting for Paul and Minta, friends of the family, to come back, engaged as she hopes because she had been the matchmaker. While Lily is "trying to analyse the cause of the sudden exhilaration," Mrs. Ramsay thought: "They must come now […]." It becomes clear that Mrs. Ramsay will leave customs and conventions as they are and continue to focus on feminine matters, defined as such by convention, after their dinner.

So will Minta. She represents the vain and superficial woman, i.e., an example of one type of the female characters in realist paintings in a Vermeerian sense, in the Dutch realist scene. She comes in "awfully late," "horribly late" and all she sees is the loss of her "grandmother's brooch."[549] She does not honor the party with a careful, interested look; she looks up and down with "a suffusion

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[545] Stein 49

[546] Stein 49

[547] Cf. title of the book by Gruber

[548] Gruber 124

[549] *TL* 113

in her large brown eyes" and "a sound of lamentation in her voice."[550] Her large, brown eyes' only function seems to be to attract men. She certainly manages to "rouse […] [Mr Ramsay's] chivalry."[551] Minta is vain, superficial, neither intellectually developed nor ambitious, silly. Mr. Ramsay likes to tell her that and keep her in this exact state:

> She was by way of being terrified of him – he was so fearfully clever, and the first night when she had sat by him, and he talked about George Eliot, she had been really frightened, for she had left the third volume of *Middlemarch* in the train and she never knew what happened in the end; but afterwards she got on perfectly, and made herself out even more ignorant than she was, because he liked telling her she was a fool. And so tonight, directly he laughed at her, she was not frightened. Besides, she knew, directly she came into the room, that the miracle had happened; she wore her golden haze.[552]

Minta does see something when she comes in: it is the reflection of her glow produced by her being engaged, in their eyes. Minta does not offer her own image of the scene and, therefore, neither of herself (reflection is only a trigger of an image, not yet an image) and, as a consequence, an image provided by somebody else immediately replaces her own of herself – it is the image of a traditionally-minded man for a woman who only exists in terms of her beauty and attractiveness. This is all she wants them to see and Mr. Ramsay plays his part in the intended exchange wonderfully. Minta would have had the chance to study such characters as she is herself with a careful study of a development story of Dorothea in *Middlemarch*. She loses the copy on the train and does not finish the story, which shows how little she cares about improving her flirty and vain appearance – an image that has always been associated with women and will always be, an image that will always keep women underdeveloped and, as a consequence, men too. He "laughs" and in his laugh her "golden haze" reflects. Figuratively speaking, for Minta the train of modernity, with a copy of *Middlemarch* on it, has left.

Mrs. Ramsay is the spectator of this happening. Neither when seeing the situation with somebody else, nor when she recognizes subordinating and thus curtailing views in herself, does she intervene. She appreciates her husband in this manner; it brings her back to the times when he courted her and it reminds her of his attractiveness, an image which she maintains by praising him:

> And for a moment she felt what she had never expected to feel again – jealousy. For he, her husband, felt it too – Minta's glow; he liked these girls, these golden-reddish girls, with something flying, something a little wild and harum-scarum about them, who didn't 'scrape their hair off', weren't as he said about Lily Briscoe, 'skimpy'. There was some quality which she herself had not, some lustre, some richness, which attracted him, amused him […]. [Mrs Ramsay] was thankful to them for laughing at him […] till he seemed a young man; a man very attractive to women, not burdened, not weighed down with the greatness of his labours and sorrows of the world and his

[550] *TL* 113

[551] *TL* 113

[552] *TL* 113

> fame or his failure, but again as she had first known him, gaunt but gallant; helping her out of a boat, she remembered […].[553]

In "Minta's glow" Mrs. Ramsay relives a moment in her memory when she was young, which she enjoys. She does not study the scene and characters in it carefully; the scene triggers a memory and prompts her to look at her inner image. This image, consequently, has an influence on the way she perceives Lily. Mrs. Ramsay's perception is a reflection on an image encoded by Mr. Ramsay and his way of looking at women. According to this image, Lily does not match the image of a woman who makes the man feel appreciated and successful. Lily does not have the "glow" and the "haze" about her and her inner life – her mental and artistic potential – is not valued. By contrast, Mrs. Ramsay simultaneously strengthens Minta's image and superficial views and also her own. Mrs. Ramsay sticks to an ideal of "the subjection of all wives" to "the greatness of man's intellect"[554] although it does not fulfill her.

These two female characters cannot be counted on to benefit from the change that actually "went through them all"[555] and proactively offer insight and solutions, since they do not have an ambition to improve. Mrs. Ramsay's silence and physical stillness are referred to repeatedly and convey a two-fold message: first, in the way she is seen – kept still in the image of ideal beauty – and second, in the way she presents herself and wants to be seen – as the ideal, subordinated, and thus adored wife. Beauty is seen as something that attracts, not as a certain brilliance that the female characters could provide and which requires an Impressionist, rather than a rigid realist, conventionalist view to grasp. Here is an evoked painting of Mrs. Ramsay's heroic beauty as seen by Tansley, a character with a very bright and very traditional mind, who by visualizing a heroic representation of the woman dons the mantle of heroism for himself:

> […] suddenly, in she came, stood for a moment silent, […] stood quite motionless for a moment against a picture of Queen Victoria wearing the blue ribbon of the Garter; and all at once he realized that it was this: it was this: – she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen. / With stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen and wild violets. […] Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; felt the wind and the cyclamen and the violets for he was walking with a beautiful woman for the first time in his life.[556]

Tansley sees Mrs. Ramsay as a Victorian heroine. Besides, he sees romanticist imagery behind the fixed forms of beauty of a classical or history painting, but no realism (closeness, actuality) and no innovative force; it simply gives them the sense of being a romantic hero around her. Her beauty to him is what it reflects on him. Mrs. Ramsay lets him see her like that and remains still and silent.

Lily, on the other hand, feels the change in the representation of the dinner scene in the Dutch realist style and the need to do something with this awareness of the potential within the represented objects and within her capability of perception. This is her ambition, one which she will

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[553] *TL* 114

[554] *TL* 14

[555] *TL* 112

[556] *TL* 17

express in a painting. Her painting should reveal this potential. The act of painting and studying representation equals analyzing the situations and options of seeing and representing.[557] Lily does not want to accept the representation of women in a Dutch realist style – in fact, any archaic style that limits their being to attractiveness, silliness, or existing only to furnish another being. Her painting of Mrs. Ramsay shows her gaze refinement and development as an artist. In order to see her development process, it is appropriate to study her painting. Lily's painting is scattered throughout the whole book and a study of the same can be divided into the three parts of the *Awakening Conscience Model*: Stages 1, 2, and 3. Depending on her development stage, she creates different visuals. The different stages will be identified and analyzed in this sub-section according to what Lily paints and the way she is represented by other characters. Included in the analysis of the three Stages are those of the two Impulses. Impressionist painting allows for a discussion of Lily's first Impulse: how she reads scenes. Cubist painting ambitions allow for the discussion of her capturing and bringing into a form the detected essence of objects.

In other words, what she sees is her Impressionist discourse, i.e., her negotiation with existing practices of viewing, and what she paints is her Cubist discourse, i.e., her negotiation with and refinement of her *Selbstbild* and how she eventually finds the courage and self-consciousness to create. Lily's Impulses are much more public than Dorothea's and Isabel's. She actively deals with her actual surroundings and current-day material by painting and, by doing so, instructs herself and the reader who follows her in how to read painting and representation – and with it actuality . She thereby shares how difficult it is to be a spectator-painter and how much this position needs to be constantly strengthened and developed – again and again. With Lily's painting, I would like to show that a subjective creation is also always an intersubjective creation. Alignment and harmonization – an agreement in a way – can happen as soon the subjectively created image is made visible and debatable by other characters. Enrichment and development of the subjective creation only happens through challenges which are contributions from outside. Vice versa, only by subjective contributions, can the development of other views, general views perhaps, be achieved. Lily's painting is such a contribution to other views. Because it is her work, it is a *Selbstbild* that she contributes.

4.2.1 In Stage 1 – Lily's Mariana Stage: "Intensity of Perception"[558] Blocked

In her Mariana stage, Lily is insecure about her own painting capabilities and hesitant to show what she has come up with. Lily's intense perception does not yet produce strong enough images that can stand the test of the traditional images of woman and traditional painting techniques. The reason for this is that she has the illusion she is painting what Mrs. Ramsay could be and chooses not to be. She herself has the illusion that she is already a spectator-painter. Lily will have to turn her attention to what she herself could be, a state she has not, at first, yet achieved, and develop herself to become a spectator-painter. In this stage, as a consequence, images that others have of her give her doubts

[557] Cf. *TL* 113

[558] *TL* 39-40

about herself. She paints Mrs. Ramsay and her son James through the drawing-room window from the lawn outside the house. The painting object can be considered a Victorian indoor scene. Lily as the spectator from the outside announces a softening of the frame of Mariana's room around Mrs. Ramsay. I will argue that it is, in fact, Lily who is in Mariana's room and will break this frame open in Stage 3.

For the time being, when confronted with the socially accepted image of women, represented in this sub-section by Tansley's philosophy and Mr. Ramsay's views, Lily reacts with a passive, intimidated, and frustrated attitude – with a Mariana pose. Lily feels insecure when it comes to her painting even though she values neither Tansley and Mr. Ramsay nor their achievements highly:

> He was really, Lily Briscoe thought, in spite of his eyes, but then look at his nose, look at his hands, the most uncharming human being she had ever met. Then why did she mind what he said? Women can't write, women can't paint – what did that matter coming from him, since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it? Why did her whole being bow, like corn under a wind, and erect itself again from this abasement only with a great and rather painful effort? She must make it once more. There's the sprig on the table-cloth; there's my painting. I must move the tree to the middle; that matters – nothing else. Could she not hold fast to that, she asked herself, and not lose her temper, and not argue; and if she wanted a little revenge take it by laughing at him?[559]

Lily describes her position as being that of a woman who is not standing upright, who is not self-conscious and lacks a clear plan in mind, all of which evokes the position of Mariana. She has assumed the position of the *inactive female artist* – who has paused and is waiting, for what is not clear. She could get inspiration from the table-cloth (Mariana's?), but does not. Lily's attitude is not the passiveness and submissiveness of Mariana, but nonetheless reflects inactivity, a block which, if we also remember the two Vermeerian types of women as well as *Mariana* in the section on Dorothea, can be represented by tables, a tablecloth, closed windows, and curtains.

Consequently, the intellectual Tansley, also sometimes called the "atheist,"[560] a non-believer of modern thinking, cannot distinguish between Lily's ambition and Mrs. Ramsay's as well as Minta's goals in life, which becomes clear when he makes it known that "[h]e was not going to be condescended to by these silly women [Mrs. Ramsay and Lily]. He had been reading in his room, and now he came down and it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy. […] Women make civilization impossible with all their 'charm', all their silliness."[561] He is convinced that women are not capable of contributing to the arts or philosophy. Criticism on women's creative and transformative power of social conditions can also be detected in this utterance, although not coming from Tansley whose opinions are stereotypical and lack nuance. It is much more likely that the criticism comes from the text and is the text's ambition to improve.

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[559] *TL* 99

[560] *TL* 7

[561] *TL* 98-9

Contrary to Mariana, Lily has an easel and her canvas in *her room* and not only completed paintings within reach. This represents a call for action and the creation of an *ambition to improve*. Mariana's embroidery, which I analyzed as the female alternative to painting, is extended to the art of painting in Lily's case. Lily speaks of "revenge", which her painting would be, but does not yet make a start. "Moving the tree" to the middle will become the metaphor of making what she sees in nature the center of her representation (not the conventions of culture that hold her down) and to have a powerful, steadfast item in her painting.

It is notable that Mrs. Ramsay also sees Lily as inadequate to the task of painting and implicitly only cares about her marrying William Bankes. She fails to notice a benefit for herself Lily's effort, namely that Lily could help her fulfill her own goals. Lily is certain of the existence of Mrs. Ramsay's modern goals. Mrs. Ramsay's gaze cuts off modern ambitions with her representation of her as an object whose degree of likability counts. Mrs. Ramsay did not take Lily seriously. When a sound interrupts a calm afternoon inside the drawing room, Mrs. Ramsay muses:

> Only Lily Briscoe, she was glad to find; and that did not matter. But the sight of the girl standing on the edge of the lawn painting reminded her; she was supposed to be keeping her head as much in the same position as possible for Lily's picture! Mrs Ramsay smiled. With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; but she was an independent little creature, Mrs Ramsay liked her for it, and so remembering her promise, she bent her head.[562]

We learn about Lily's painting from Mrs. Ramsey who had promised to sit as a painting model. She is aware that Lily paints her but does not value the painter or the painting project. Learning the perspective of the painted subject does two things: first, it makes clear that the character has a voice and that keeping still is an effort (it would be easier, so Lily would judge the situation, to move naturally and speak her mind). Second, it also shows that an object is normally in motion and a painting captures only a moment. Mrs. Ramsay thus raises awareness of an Impressionist concern which Lily would gladly capture. However, Mrs. Ramsay is disrespectful, on the one hand, concerning Lily's art and art as an occupation for a woman and, on the other hand, concerning Lily's appearance and her chances to marry – a concern that Mrs. Ramsay finds important for women. "[…] Lily's charm was her Chinese eyes, aslant in her white, puckered little face, but it would take a clever man to see it. […] Smiling, for an admirable idea had flashed upon her this very second – William and Lily should marry […]."[563]

Until reaching stage 3, Lily faces a gap between seeing and painting. She cannot capture in paint the whole variety of visual information she sees in her surroundings, which to her only means one thing: her qualities as a painter are insufficient. Whenever she is confronted with voices against female painters, her lack of self-confidence is strengthened. Lily has an intense and inventive gaze – that of an artist. She openly picks up the visual phenomena so rich in nature and tries to transform them into representations of the persons she paints. She has a productive view in that she creates

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[562] *TL* 21

[563] *TL* 31

with her eyes and is attentive to her surroundings. She captures all the movements in nature. Lily's productive gaze becomes obvious when, on a stroll with William Bankes, she was

> looking about her, for it was bright enough, the grass still a soft deep green, the house starred in its greenery with purple passion flowers, and rooks dropping cool cries from the high blue. But something moved, flashed, turned a silver wing in the air. It was September after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening. So off they strolled in the garden in the usual direction, past the tennis lawn, past the pampas grass, to that break in the thick hedge, guarded by red-hot pokers like braziers of clear burning coal, between which the blue waters of the bay looked bluer than ever.[564]

Time has passed from Dorothea's time to Lily's: the hedges are thick, which was also already the case in Isabel's time, but in Lily's field of vision there is a break in the sequence of the hedges through which the sea, the fluidity of what is behind a visible surface, announces itself. The sea is an additional element in Lily's representation compared to the hedge images in the earlier novels. Lily is a developed observer.

However, she experiences a gap between seeing and painting and assigns this experience to her lack of competence. She sees more in nature and characters than others but cannot capture it with paint. She sees the riches of nature but is, and stays in love with, traditional life and representation:

> The jacmanna was bright violet; the wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable thought it was […] to see everything pale, elegant, semi-transparent. Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself – struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: 'But this is what I see; this is what I see', and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. And it was then too, in that chill and windy way, as she began to paint, that there forced themselves upon her other things, her own inadequacy, her insignificance, keeping house for her father off the Brompton Road, and had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted so far) at Mrs Ramsay's knee and say to her – but what could one say to her?' I'm in love with you?' No, that was not true. 'I'm in love with this all', waving her hand at the hedge, the house, the children? It was absurd, it was impossible. One could not say what one meant. So now she laid her brushes neatly in the box, side by side […].[565]

Lily cannot help but see art and creation in actuality. She enriches and enhances actuality – nature and this woman with her youngest son James – and looks for honest representation. At precisely the moment she could realize the force of her artist's gaze, she nevertheless feels the benefit of a life like that of Mrs. Ramsay. This shift in her perspective is reflected in the shift from first looking at the hedge

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[564] TL 23-4

[565] *TL* 23

and then inside the window – two perspectives she does not yet manage to bring into unison and which form a conflict, one that she cannot consciously manage, since it is guided by her *unexternalized inner image* and not her conscious self. It becomes clear to the reader that Lily is in love with the "Victorian icon of womanhood"[566] that Mrs. Ramsay represents. As long as she is, she cannot put into practice what she finds through her Impressionist inquisitiveness. For instance, she understands the technique of applying a layer of soft and shimmering colors on the things she sees with which to represent the influence of light and wind on appearance and with it the flightiness of a moment. But then, Lily has to fight "a thousand forces" to stay focused on these riches and focused on her need to make them seen and not to give in to an enjoyment of a life lived like that of Mrs. Ramsay. The forces are from within and around her. She feels insecure and insignificant in connection with her points of view and her painting. As a consequence, she lays "her brushes neatly in the box" and does not yet capture on canvas the riches of either of the lives around her. Painting for her, as in Dorothea's case, also means a harmonization of Mariana's three layers. In Lily's case, the three layers are the following: the idealized painting of motherhood, the nature painting with all its powerful meaning, and her insecurities and vagueness about what she wants as her inner image.

The young painter does not only perceive the flightiness of a moment, but also feelings in represented objects. She is, in a sense, capable of detecting a spectator's *unexternalized inner image*'s influence on a representation, but, of course, cannot steer it yet. In the scene I would like to show to illustrate the topic of capturing feelings, Lily marvels precisely about the reason for this influence of the spectator's feelings on the object in focus. She reflects on the question of how feelings towards another person and nature come into being, and whether there is any reasonable explanation – any logical sequence – which can be detected. She compares her reaction to Mr. Ramsay – in the neutral, realist style – and her affection for William Bankes – with his Romanticist and Impressionist tendency. William Bankes was

> […] pausing by the pear tree, well brushed, scrupulously exact, exquisitely judicial. Suddenly, as if the movement of his hand had released it, the load of her accumulated impressions of him tilted up, and down poured in a ponderous avalanche all she felt about him. That was one sensation. Then up rose in a fume the essence of his being. That was another. She felt herself transfixed by the intensity of her perception; it was his severity; his goodness. I respect you (she addressed him silently) in every atom; you are not vain; you are entirely impersonal; you are finer than Mr Ramsay; you are the finest human being that I know; […] praise would be an insult to you; generous, pure-hearted, heroic man! […]
>
> How then did it work out, all this? How did one judge people, think of them? How did one add up this and that and conclude that it was liking one felt, or disliking? And to those words, what meaning attached, after all? Standing now, apparently transfixed, by the pear tree, impressions poured in upon her of those two men, and to follow her thought was like following a voice which speaks too quickly to be taken down by one's pencil, and the voice was her own voice saying without prompting undeniable, everlasting, contradictory things, so that even the fissures and humps on the bark of the pear tree were irrevocably fixed there for eternity. You have greatness, she continued, but Mr Ramsay has none of it. He is petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is

[566] Hui 74

> spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs Ramsay to death; but he has what you (she addressed Mr Bankes) have not; a fiery unworldliness; he knows nothing about trifles; he loves dogs and his children.[567]

Lily simultaneously sees and feels. She notices that feelings have an influence and this influence is more stable than, for example, the change of light and, according to her, more obvious and "undeniable." This is an experience of the fact that inner images leave traces on the visual. Attaching and perceiving them more consciously is only possible when they are, in fact, conscious. In any case, leaving room for impressions and feelings when seeing opens up the way to the "essence of his being." It, of course, also opens up the window to the spectator's feelings and her inner images – to this reciprocity of seeing and being seen. Lily introduces in her visual experience another element, namely, that of sound, that of "her own voice," which represents thoughts and feelings. Only her "intense perception" can take hold of such abstract a representation as sound, not her painting, however.

Lily presents two male characters and her views of them in this scene. This is relevant because she will eventually construct her painting as a reaction to both men's views of her painting or the theme she wants to capture. Mr. Ramsay's view of the theme she suspects, and William's incomprehensible view of her art she will learn about in a discussion on her painting. The discussion is about the representation of a traditional theme (mother and child) which Lily wants to paint in her own way but which, in Lily's perception, Mr. Ramsay keeps traditional. She does not trust Mr. Ramsay with a truthful representation. She is well-aware of Mr. Ramsay's way of looking at his wife and son and objects to this. The novel picks a traditional (religious and realist) theme of a mother and her child with which to negotiate the meaning of the two objects – Mrs. Ramsay and James – with each other. In a way, this is a continuation of the different handling of *Adoration of a Child* and the battle of representation between Osmond (Mr. Ramsay) and Henrietta (Lily) from the *Portrait of a Lady*. Henrietta took an existing painting to 'confront' the husband with an alternative; Lily paints the challenging alternative. In both cases, it is a battle between the husband's image and an outside perspective about the representation of the wife as well as a critique of the "mutual misunderstanding"[568] and the "inadequacy of human relationships"[569] in marriage.

Mr. Ramsay establishes the traditional theme with allegorical visual language. Mr. Ramsay as spectator, concerned with his thoughts and his status, sees his wife and son in the window frame as a symbol of his social success:

> He was safe, he was restored to his privacy. He stopped to light his pipe, looked once at this wife and son in the window, and as one raises one's eyes from a page in an express train and sees a farm, a tree, a cluster of cottages as an illustration, a confirmation of something on the printed page to which one returns, fortified, and satisfied, so without his distinguishing either his son or his wife, the sight of them fortified him and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged the energies of his splendid mind. […] his wife

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[567] *TL* 29-30

[568] *PL* 198

[569] *TL* 47

> and son, together, in the window. They needed his protection; he gave it them. […] Who shall blame him? Who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off, and halts by the window and gazes at his wife and son, who very distant at first, gradually come closer and closer, till lips and book and head are clearly before him, though still lovely and unfamiliar from the intensity of his isolation and the waste of ages and the perishing of the stars, and finally putting his pipe in his pocket and bending his magnificent head before her – who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world?[570]

Mr. Ramsay does not have a "distinguishing" look at wife and son, i.e., at them as persons. He is in love with his own heroism that is reflected in the scene of his wife and son in the window. His "intensity of his isolation" is a contrast to Lily's "intensity of perception" that shows that he is not open to outside influence regarding what he sess. He keeps a superficial view of "the beauty of the world." For him, "[…] the arts are merely a decoration imposed on top of human life; they do not express it."[571]

Another moment when Mr. Ramsay looks at his wife makes clear that he keeps his wife in a passive and stupid state, just like Minta, a state that makes him feel comfortable:

> "Mrs Ramsay raised her head […] like a person in a light sleep […]. […] he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful. Her beauty seemed to him, if that were possible, to increase."[572]

His idealizing – and at the same time degrading – gaze of her prohibits a clear view. Contrary to Dorothea and Isabel, this wife does not punish her husband for his mistaken understanding of his wife and surprise him with plenty of own ideas about life and their role in it. Mrs. Ramsay keeps all to herself.

Lily can neither believe nor accept that all the inner life which the scene of mother and child holds is forgotten. She sees emotions in the theme of mother and child. Whereas Mr. Ramsay only sees Mrs. Ramsay's beauty, Lily is capable of seeing all of the following emotions in the same objects: James hates it when his father stops and looks at them, when he is in his father's picture:

> By looking fixedly at the page, [James] hoped to make him move on; by pointing his finger at a word, he hoped to recall his mother's attention, which, he knew angrily, wavered instantly his father stopped. But no. Nothing would make Mr Ramsay move on. There he stood, demanding sympathy. Mrs Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself, and, half turning, seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect in the air a rain of energy, a column of spray, looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating (quietly though she sat, taking up her stocking again), and into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like the beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy.[573]

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[570] *TL* 39-40

[571] *TL* 50

[572] *TL* 139

[573] *TL* 43-4

Mrs. Ramsay takes the upright and energetic position that Lily missed in herself in an earlier scene. But this position costs Mrs. Ramsay a lot of effort and is short-lived so that, in the seating position, all this potential of "fecundity" and "life" remains hidden.

> Immediately, Mrs. Ramsay seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself, so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page of Grimm's fairy story, while there throbbed through her, like the pulse in a spring which has expanded to its full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation.[574]

It is Mrs. Ramsay's function as her husband's wife as well as her fear of showing her unhappiness that squeeze all initiative out of her.

> A shadow was on the page; she looked up. It was Augustus Carmichael shuffling past, precisely now, at the very moment when it was painful to be reminded of the inadequacy of human relationship, that the most perfect was flawed, and could not bear the examination which, loving her husband, with her instinct for truth, she turned upon it; when it was painful to feel herself convicted of unworthiness, and impeded in her proper function by these lies, these exaggerations, - it was at this moment when she fretted thus ignobly in the wake of her exaltation, that Mr Carmichael shuffled past […].[575]

She becomes fully aware of what she contributes to her family and friends, but at the moment she allows herself to think in this way, she checks herself again and reduces her ambition to wanting to get along with her husband.

> […] the sense of her own beauty becoming, as it did so seldom, present to her […]. She bore about with her, she could not help knowing it, the torch of her beauty; she carried it erect into any room that she entered; and after all, veil it as she might, and shrink from the monotony of bearing that it imposed on her, her beauty was apparent. She had been admired. She had been loved. She had entered rooms where mourners sat. Tears had flown in her presence. Men, and women too, letting go the multiplicity of things, had allowed themselves with her the relief of simplicity. […] That was what she minded, coming as it did on top of her discontent with her husband; the sense she had now when Mr Carmichael shuffled past, […] that she was suspected; and that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity.[576]

Now how should one paint such an amount of feelings and the complexity of human relations visible as shadows and traces of other characters' stakes in the representation of Mrs. Ramsay? There is Mr. Ramsay's ideal of his wife and her beauty. There is also a reflection of the image of Mrs. Ramsay's beauty created by Tansley earlier. And then there's the shadow of her guilty conscience due to her shortcomings as a wife in the shape of Augustus Carmichael, the highly appreciated poet friend of the Ramsays. Lily sees that Mr. Ramsay does not encourage Mrs. Ramsay to move out of her seat and position and Lily suspects that Mrs. Ramsay also sees in the same way as Lily what is behind the façade and all the potential of the world. There is certain consciousness in the painted object, but it is locked inside her.

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[574] *TL* 45-6

[575] *TL* 47

[576] *TL* 48-9

Lily wants to bring all of this to light with her painting: This is what it looks like when Mrs. Ramsay gives her husband sympathy. This is what it looks like when Mrs. Ramsay tries to hide her frustration and lack of respect for her husband and thus their failed marriage or the failure of all human relations – "the pettiness of some part of her, and of human relations, how flawed they are, how despicable, how self-seeking, at their best."[577] Their marriage seems perfect when she gives him sympathy; what she needs is not relevant because she (together with her son) is the ideal picture of marriage, wife and son. She was admired, loved (like Isabel who had been "loved" and "adored") and this has to be sufficient. But Lily does not understand why Mrs. Ramsay should reduce herself to a vision of beauty her husband has pre-designed for her and not let her beauty, also her inner beauty, bloom. "Nothing happened. Nothing! Nothing! as she leant her head against Mrs Ramsay's knee. And yet, she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored in Mrs Ramsay's heart. How then, she had asked herself, did one know one thing or another thing about people, sealed as they were?"[578] Mrs. Ramsay asks herself that too, in a way, by reflecting on all she achieved that her husband does not know and that is what Lily, as her painter, wants to bring to light.

But first, Mr. Ramsay manages to lock Lily in as well. Lily's hesitation turns into a manifestation of her wishing to assume the same position as Mrs. Ramsay in that woman's husband's gaze, and take shelter in it. As a consequence, Lily is not free in her representation and feels restricted by Mr. Ramsay. "Lily had said something about [Mr. Ramsay's] frightening her – he changed from one mood to another so suddenly."[579] "Lily Briscoe went on putting away her brushes, looking up, looking down. Looking up, there he was – Mr Ramsay […]."[580] In that moment, Lily even copies Minta's unsteady and unproductive ways of looking up and down without any purpose. "Lily saw him gazing at Mrs Ramsay": "For him to gaze as Lily saw him gazing at Mrs Ramsay was a rapture […]."[581] "Such a rapture […] made Lily Briscoe forget entirely what she had been about to say." [582] "She wiped one brush after another upon a piece of old rag, menially, on purpose. She took shelter from the reverence which covered all women; she felt herself praised."[583] Her infatuation for Mrs Ramsay's way of life, the opportunity to take shelter in this safe role as an unambitious wife, her relating Mr. Ramsay's gaze also to herself and her yielding to Mr. Ramsay's authority stand in the way of her successful painting:

> She could have wept. It was bad, it was bad, it was infinitively bad! She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealized; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral. Of all that only a few random marks scrawled upon the canvas

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[577] *TL* 49

[578] *TL* 60

[579] *TL* 53-4

[580] *TL* 54

[581] *TL* 55

[582] *TL* 56

[583] *TL* 56

> remained. And it could never be seen; never be hung even, and there was Mr Tansley whispering in her ear, 'Women can't paint, women can't write […]'[584]

Lily's Impressionist ways which help her perceive the burning colors and monumental buildings go beyond what a Mr. Paunceforte – a traditional painter and "the embodiment of patriarchy"[585] – would have been able to capture. Just when she feels confident about her ways of perception, Tansley's voice against female artists come back to her. She wonders: "How did she differ?"[586] How can she be different? Truly different? This is the question to which she needs to find an answer. Another artistic language will be necessary for that. The one that helps her see things (Impressionism) it not the one that helps her produce. A self-conscious language is required – from a self-conscious artist that produces a self-conscious painting. Cubism meets these requirements and the "few random marks" on Lily's canvas announce yet a freer form of expression that Lily will investigate further after her mirror stage.

With her existing language and lack of confidence in expression, Lily does not get her message across. This shows when scientific William Bankes challenges her initial painting and fails to understand what it represents. William looks at her painting, to Lily's disliking. She knows he would not understand and she cannot make him see her intention with it. "She would have snatched her picture off the easel, but she said to herself, One must."[587] So she does and first indications of the draft of her artworks are the following:

> […] as [Mrs. Ramsay] sat in the wicker arm-chair in the drawing-room window she wore, to Lily's eyes, an august shape; the shape of a dome. / This ray passed level with Mr Bankes's ray straight to Mrs Ramsay sitting reading there with James at her knee.[588]

William and Lily look at the same object in actuality and then at the painting. William is interested, but lacks imagination. His investigation of the painting is thorough, but does not lead to comprehension:

> Nothing could be cooler and quieter. Taking out a penknife, Mr Bankes tapped the canvas with the bone handle. What did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, 'just there?' he asked. /
>
> It was Mrs Ramsay reading to James, [Lily] said. She knew his objection—that no one could tell it for a human shape. But she had made no attempt at likeness, she said. For what reason had she introduced them then? he asked. Why indeed?—except that if there, in that corner, it was bright, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness. Simple, obvious, commonplace, as it was, Mr Bankes was interested. Mother and child then—objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty—might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence.[589]

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[584] *TL* 56-7

[585] Hui 75

[586] *TL* 57

[587] *TL* 61

[588] TL 60

[589] *TL* 61

Lily has transformed the violets in Mrs. Ramsay's surrounding onto the woman herself. The purple shape, in this sense, intends to capture what is within and around Mrs. Ramsay. William Bankes is not ready for an artistic language that works with flat shapes instead of an exact copying of nature, perspective, and dimensions. He implicitly asks for a realist and accurate representation. Lily's painting, however, goes more and more into abstraction. She started with the blurring of outlines and now includes geometrical forms and shapes – the smallest units of meaning that stand for everything: object, emotion, nature influence. She does not have the ambition to paint strictly mimetic paintings. In fact, Lily does not want to paint "likeness." William is surprised that a shadow, a shape, represents mother and child and does not believe it. Thus Lily further explains her painting:

> But the picture was not of them, she said. Or, not in his sense. There were other senses, too, in which one might reverence them. By a shadow here and a light there, for instance. Her tribute took that form, if, as she vaguely supposed, a picture must be a tribute. A mother and child might be reduced to a shadow without irreverence. A light here required a shadow there. He considered. He was interested. He took it scientifically in complete good faith. […] he turned, with his glasses raised to the scientific examination of her canvas. The question being one of the relations of masses, of lights and shadows, which, to be honest, he had never considered before, he would like to have it explained – what then did she make of it? And he indicated the scene before them. She looked. She could not show him what she wished to make of it, could not see it even herself, without a brush in her hand. She took up once more her old painting position with the dim eyes and the absent-minded manner, subduing all her impressions as a woman to something much more general; becoming once more under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children – her picture. It was a question, she remembered, how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken. She stopped; she did not want to bore him; she took the canvas lightly off the easel. / But it had been seen; it had been taken from her. This man has shared with her something profoundly intimate. And, thanking Mr Ramsay for it and Mrs Ramsay for it and the hour and the place, crediting the world with a power which she had not suspected, that one could walk away down that long gallery not alone any more but arm-in-arm with somebody – the strangest feeling in the world, and the most exhilarating – she nicked the catch of her paint-box to, more firmly than was necessary, and the nick seemed to surround in a circle for ever the paint-box, the lawn, Mr Bankes, and that wild villain, Cam, dashing past.[590]

Shadow and light give the painting three dimensions and depth – in a Cubist sense – and emphasize that the reduction to a shape is not curtailing, but, on the contrary, unlocks meaning. William detects a freer assembly of masses. This stands for the new relations she establishes which are the new system of order that she gives them and thus the new – her own – meaning. Already at this point of her development process, there are signs that Lily does not adopt a given way to represent, but creates one.

This moment of self-initiative and courage to look at herself as being able to come up with her own contribution lasts about as long as Mrs. Ramsay's when the married woman stands upright

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[590] *TL* 62-3

and immediately sits down again (as explained before). Lily immediately stops painting after her art discussion with William Bankes, since she feels that she cannot create a composition that stands the test of a man, of reason, and science. This fear is one of Lily's inner images: her insecurity about what it means that she sees. Hui in her analysis of the female artist in the novel links the "vacancy" in the center of the painting with a fear of expression:

> [t]he blankness in the middle of the picture can be linked to the fact that women have lost their ability to express. [...] Under a patriarchal system, they are confined to the legal and allowable means of expression – needlework. When Lily begins to express herself by painting, she finds it difficult to speak, since she cannot understand the discourse that men have been using.[591]

This insecurity is not yet externalized so that, at the moment, it sneaks into her representations, but cannot actively and consciously be made use of. After this experience, she firmly closes her painting-box and stops painting. In terms of her painting of Mrs. Ramsay, she assumes her "old painting position" which equals the passive Mariana position – paused and unsatisfied.

4.2.2 In Stage 2 – A Mirror Stage without A Mirror in Actuality

Stage 2 is about the question of what it is that Lily needs to transform her immensely creative and productive gaze into a tangible result. It is her consciousness of her stake in the object she tries to paint – Mrs. Ramsay and her son. Connected with Lily's insecurity about her painting is the immense temptation of giving in to a conventional life the inner image of which Lily thinks to have under control (she could not marry William Bankes who thinks so differently from her), but, in fact, it slumbers in her just as much as in Mrs. Ramsay. In addition, she needs to recognize that she and Mrs. Ramsay also have in common their fear of shortcomings that hinder them from trying out something different. Only a mirror stage with Mrs. Ramsay will bring this into Lily's consciousness and free her from fear of creation.

The mirror stage is highly complex in this novel. It asks of Lily the highest participation and initiative. It does not simply produce consciousness, but consists of several eye-opening moments that need to be assembled. Mrs. Ramsay is dead and Lily has to paint the drawing-room window scene from memory. This element of absence raises awareness to the necessity of seeing inside boundaries. Mirroring as a gaze exchange that happens in actuality is no longer possible. Besides, Lily hardly ever appears inside; her painting always happens outside. She needs to be able to feel what Mrs. Ramsay feels behind the window to reflect that lady's positions with her own – to have a successful perspective switch. Only one time does Lily appear inside – during the Dutch realist scene – and this is the moment I used for the illustration of Lily's difference from Mrs. Ramsay. I also used the scene to show that Lily starts off in the Mariana stage as well. I would like to call to memory the fact that, just like the other characters, Lily chose not to look outside and have an active and realist view in this indoor scene. This figuratively puts Lily into Mariana's room, an experience which will later facilitate a

[591] Hui 75

perspective exchange with the absent Mrs. Ramsay. In a way, the *position switch* which in the earlier novels was the completion of the mirror stage, also happens here in that Lily is present to Mr. Ramsay's view and Mrs. Ramsay is not. The *position switch* here, however, is not the final stage but a promoter of creation and finalization of her painting.

The novel invests much time and effort in preparing the Awakening Conscience scene upon which Lily can paint and build her consciousness. Yet intangible essence is evoked. It repeats and alters the inside-out perspective of the Dutch realist scene, describing the rooms of the summer house at night. Shortly before Lily arrives again at the Ramsay summer estate after ten years of absence, the power of the night that they all successfully kept outside in the dinner scene cannot be precluded any longer. It enters the rooms where the candles no longer burn and the focus no longer lies on the community and group of people – and where any given order of daylight or the Lighthouse beam is absent. A number of nightly, undetermined elements[592] are vividly described which Lily will give form and meaning to.

> So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof a down-pouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which, creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up her a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers.[593]

This scene contrasts with the dinner scene in Dutch realist style in that the boundary between inside and outside is broken and clear-cut rules and objects challenged. Diffusion of frames and contours as well as shadows characterize an essence of a scene that was formerly unnoticed and which Lily will have to bring into frames when painting Mrs. Ramsay from memory. No definite frames are suggested to the painter; she will have to choose her own.

When Lily arrives, she is exhausted and goes right to sleep. The scene strongly evokes the vigils that Dorothea and Isabel keep. Although for Lily a vigil does not follow her mirror stage, it also had the function of facilitating creativity and consciousness. The night is detached from the reality of daytime and Lily is restless. As if not to corrupt her creative gaze with any given order, she does not 'see' actuality before she has inspiring impressions during her sleep with which in mind she wakes up the following morning, "awake." Again she witnesses the inflowing, abstract essences of the visible world. They now also infuse the light of the day.

> Through the open window the voice of the beauty of the world came murmuring, too softly to hear exactly what it said […]. Gently the waves would break (Lily heard them in her sleep); tenderly the light fell (it seemed to come through her eyelids). […] The sigh of all the seas breaking in measure around the isles soothed them; the night wrapped them; nothing broke their sleep, until, the birds beginning and the dawn weaving their thin voices in to its whiteness, a cart grinding, a dog somewhere barking, the sun lifted the curtain, broke the veil on their eyes, and Lily Briscoe stirring in her sleep clutched at her blankets as a faller clutches at the turf on the edge of a

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[592] Cf. Bronfen "Hegels Nacht der Welt" in *Tiefer als der Tag gedacht* 107

[593] *TL* 143-44

> cliff. Her eyes opened wide. Here she was again, she thought, sitting bold upright in bed. Awake.[594]

The outside comes in via soft and intangible light, wind, and sound which transgress barriers and frames. This poetry, this movement, this meaning Lily can grasp with various senses in addition to sight which is possible during the day. She now needs to transform her nightly impressions into the day and capture them in painting, in a tangible language, by means of a tender "light" through her eyelids.

Being "awake" in the morning after an inspiring night has parallels with Dorothea's awakening to consciousness. Contrary to Dorothea, whose awake gaze produced a harmonized painting out of the window onto a regular morning and a new beginning, Lily's awake gaze, however, does not yet produce her finished painting, but the start of her mission to complete it. She does not look out of the window where she might see 'Dorothea's *third painting*.' Dorothea's cannot be Lily's *third painting* because this would make it a copy and archaic for Lily. What Lily sees in the morning with "eyes open wide" is the necessity to create her *third painting* for herself and find her own way to re-encode existing images and to make them her own, just like Dorothea did before her. Lily's goal displays a different approach than Isabel's who unconsciously adopted Dorothea's *third painting* which, as she had to experience, can never be an invention because it is finished. This awaking scene is Lily's second "moment of revelation"[595] – her first being the one at the dinner table when she feels the change.

A third revelation will be necessary: namely, that in order to be able to paint, full consciousness of her inner images is necessary and full consciousness can only be gained through a physical shock that causes an epiphany. A physical shock raises her consciousness of materiality and reminds her that an impression remains unseen and unused if not worked into the everyday. Working it in, which is Lily's goal after her experience of awakening, forces her to understand what it is that she feels and senses in order to do something with it. Her frustration with the lack of power of expression with her co-characters is not enough. Her bodily frame needs to shake and startle her into action. Since Lily has not yet experienced a physical shock, she is still in the exact same spot as 10 years ago, "precisely where she stood," with the same level of consciousness. Lily never finished her picture and remembers:

> When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation. There had been a problem with the foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years. She would paint the picture now. […] Yes, it must have been precisely where she stood ten years ago. There was the wall, the hedge, the tree. The question was of some relation between those masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years.[596]

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[594] *TL* 163-63

[595] *TL* 167

[596] *TL* 167

In her memory she brings together the two revelatory moments: 1) at the dinner table and 2) when she tries to rationally explain the painting to Mr. Bankes. The "leaf pattern on the table-cloth" indicates that Lily is still not out of Mariana's room. It has to get physical, real, not theoretical; it has to concern her, it has to touch and move her. That is what the mirror stage does. Only with the experience of physicality, will she be able to put her views into practice. Before the mirror stage, no composition takes place with material, matter, actuality, and including all the stakes in a representation of different characters. In other words, there is no composition inspired by Mariana's three layers so that Lily's ideals of a truthful and complete representation and her own fear of failing as an artist are not externalized, conscious, and controlled, and the realist and actual circumstances where her ideals and inner images could become visible are not thus enriched yet. Accordingly, she cannot paint.

In a confrontation with Mr. Ramsay, Lily can make all the mirroring and realizations that she needs to achieve consciousness, and that counts as the mirror stage. It has to be a mirroring with this particular character because, for Lily, he stands for tradition, authority, a flawed way of looking, and insufficient observation, and he is the only one who can bring Mrs. Ramsay's image of ten years ago back to her for the mirroring. And it is what he represents for her that blocks her artistic task:

> Every time he approached […] ruin approached, chaos approached. She could not paint. She stooped, she turned; she took up this rag; she squeezed that tube. But all she did was to ward him off a moment. […] She set her clean canvas firmly upon the easel, as a barrier, frail, but she hoped sufficiently substantial to ward off Mr Ramsay and his exactingness.[597]

She has a "clean canvas"[598] with which she can, in Isabel's term, "start fresh" by painting onto it her realism. However, Mr. Ramsay stands behind the canvas, in the off, influencing her and the representation,[599] which indicates that her painting is a negotiation that requires a confrontation. There is something unresolved – an inner image not externalized – in her relationship with Mr. Ramsay, otherwise this item would not uncontrollably influence her view. She needs to understand the true character of the iconizing gaze that she suspects in him. In her image of his iconizing gaze, Lily's stereotypical views play a part, too.

Her first confrontation with Mr. Ramsay is, when musing about how time has passed, she looks "out of the window – it was a beautiful still day."[600] This is a picture encoded by Mr. Ramsay. "Suddenly Mr Ramsay raised his head as he passed and looked straight at her, with his distraught wild gaze which was yet so penetrating, as if he saw you, for one second, for the first time, for ever."[601] For wishing to take shelter in Mr. Ramsay's stabilizing gaze earlier, here she has it. Lily experiences that it takes him one second to create an image of a woman. This cannot be creation, but just matching the seen with a pre-existing form that he already has in mind. She tries to inhibit a confrontation and prevent him from putting her in the Mariana pose – unsuccessfully: "As if any interruption would break

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[597] TL 168-69

[598] *TL* 169

[599] Cf. Foucault's reading of *Las Meninas* in Foucault 3-18

[600] *TL* 166

[601] *TL* 167

the frail shape she was building on the table she turned her back to the window lest Mr. Ramsay should see her. She must escape somehow, be alone somewhere."[602] However, her being alone would not resolve the issue with Mr. Ramsay. She always feels the power of this gaze. "Lily [is] in despair." [603]

> With the brush slightly trembling in her fingers she looked at the hedge, the step, the wall. It was all Mrs Ramsay's doing. She was dead. Here was Lily, at forty-four, wasting her time, unable to do a thing, standing there, playing at painting, playing with the one thing one did not play at, and it was all Mrs Ramsay's fault. She was dead. The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead. / But why repeat this over and over again? Why be always trying to bring up some feeling she had not. […] Surely she could imitate from recollection the glow, the rhapsody, the self-surrender she had seen on so many women's faces (on Mrs Ramsay's, for instance) when on some occasion like this they blazed up – she could remember the look on Mrs Ramsay's face – into a rapture of sympathy, of delight in the reward they had, which, though the reason of it escaped her, evidently conferred on them the most supreme bliss of which human nature was capable. Here he was, stopped by her side. She would give him what she could. […] this was one of the moments when an enormous need urged him, without being conscious what it was, to approach any woman, to force them, he did not care how, his need was so great, to give him what he wanted: sympathy.[604]

Due to Mrs. Ramsay's absence, Lily gets to play the part of the object in Mr. Ramsay's frame. Lily blames her for that; her position in Mr. Ramsay's frame makes her very uncomfortable. She wants to avoid it and in any case will not give him "the glow, the rhapsody, the self-surrender she had seen on so many women's faces" and that Mrs. Ramsay had given him.

She also claims that she does not have and could never give such a feeling of rapture. But then all of sudden, emotions overcome her and before realizing, she has stepped into Mrs. Ramsay's role: "Remarkable boots they were […], Lily thought, looking down at them: sculptured; colossal; like everything that Mr Ramsay wore. […] 'What beautiful boots!' she exclaimed. She was ashamed of herself. To praise his boots when he asked her to solace his soul […]."[605] In her outburst of emotions, Lily repeats Mrs. Ramsay's respect for the "monumental" that she uttered in her Mariana scene that she shared with William and Lily. This is a reaction to Mr. Ramsay's demand for her feeling sympathy for him, which she fought. And then again all of sudden, Cam and James come by and Mr Ramsay focuses on them and is not dependent on Lily's attention anymore. It is then that her full sympathy for him is released.

> Why, at this completely inappropriate moment, when he was stooping over her show, should she be so tormented with sympathy for him that, as she stooped too, the blood rushed to her face, and, thinking of her callousness (she had called him a play-actor) she felt her eyes swell and tingle with tears? Thus occupied he seemed to her a figure of infinite pathos. […] she felt a sudden emptiness, a frustration. Her feeling had come too late; there it

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[602] *TL* 167

[603] *TL* 167

[604] *TL* 171

[605] *TL* 176

> was ready; but he no longer needed it. He had become a very distinguished, elderly man, who had no need of her whatsoever.[606]

Lily detects an interest in the man's feelings and doings. Previously she had judged him by what she heard about his art and the dominating influence over his wife and son that always seemed obvious to her. This view of him now is a very different view than ten years earlier when she saw nothing grand in him. Lily all of a sudden realizes that she had not judged the situation of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay completely. Now that she knows the feelings and respect that one can have for the man, she also knows about the temptation to play the role that would make him play the role of ideal husband and well-accepted man in society. This realization puts into perspective Lily's image of Mrs. Ramsay. Lily can now name more clearly what must have been going on inside that woman. Lily has undergone the same experience which made it real for her, palpable. She can now paint the woman's expression on her face more entirely because it is from experience, not simply from a "recollection" of an image.

This confrontation exposes Lily's fragmented view and her blind spot. It brings out her illusion that admiration for, sympathy with, and glow – the appearance that men paint on women's faces – would not happen to her. She also realizes that she misjudged Mr. Ramsay's gaze in underestimating Mrs. Ramsay's stake in this gaze. Furthermore, it dawns on her that for ignoring so much in the married couple's appearances, she used the same iconizing gaze and tried to impose a curtailing image on Mrs. Ramsay for which she had severely blamed Mr. Ramsay. Without the experience of making it concern her, she used an iconized gaze just as much as Mr. Ramsay. It takes the confrontation with Mr. Ramsay to open her eyes. The potential gaze exchange that she could have had with Mrs. Ramsay when Lily painted her and the object marveled about Lily's competence as a painter had been left unused by the young artist for ten years. She treated Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Ramsay both as symbol of blockages for her to exercise free and individual art. Lily realizes that she is no different from the two. Her frustration was at first that Mrs. Ramsay willingly chooses a position from where she cannot make an individual contribution and now Lily realizes that she herself has not created anything either. This realization shocks her. Finishing her picture, therefore, assumes new meaning for her: It is in reality an action that takes her a step further than female characters in earlier stories.

Once she starts to look at Mr. Ramsay more closely, she realizes another thing – something they have in common. Thus another mirroring happens. He had doubts about his art too which had blocked him and kept him remote from the pulse of life. He has now found a task in his immediate life:

> […] she recalled (standing where he had left her, holding her brush), worries had fretted it – not so nobly. He must have had his doubts about that table, she supposed; whether the table was a real table; whether it was worth the time he gave to it; whether he was able after all to find it. […] And then, she recalled there was that sudden revivification, that sudden flare (when she praised his boots), that sudden recovery of vitality and interest in ordinary human things, which too passed and changed […].[607]

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[606] *TL* 175

[607] *TL* 177

Lily is able to see a change in him. He has an interest in "ordinary human things" and is on a mission to be reconciled with his children. The -perceived stable façade of his being a patriarch "recovers vitality" in her eyes. She parallels his mission of reconciliation with his children on their boat tour to the lighthouse with hers of taking the "odd road to be walking, this of painting"[608] and to suggest her own artistic language. Lily thereby also mirrors Mr. Ramsay and realizes that one simply has to try and have experiences; one must risk undergoing the experience to be in the Mariana pose but then to create the *third painting* out of this experience. She is convinced that she does not want to let any experience go to waste. She must also pay attention to "ordinary human things" and risk confrontations. Revelations happen in cycles and only when participating in image negotiations and active experience creation.

> The great revelation [about the meaning of life] had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. […] this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability.[609]

Lily will break out of Mariana's room, but only after realizing that she was inside, too. She now wants to pay close attention to what is around her and harmonize her inner images, memories, worries, expectations with her ideals, and her painting tools, materials, themes, and elements (the "shapes" that emerge out of "chaos") from her immediate surroundings. Immediacy and palpability is what she wants to bring into the painting of Mrs. Ramsay which she now has to paint without the object present.

4.2.3 In Stage 3 – Painting Multiple Actualities and One Painting

Lily has started to negotiate Mariana's three layers in Stage 2, knowledge gained from which she will finally manage to transform into painting. The fragmented units of meaning she produced out of a negotiation with the layers will be brought into a composition. To chaos, she will give shape – one shape at a time – and a structure between the shapes. For Lily, like for Dorothea and Isabel, Stages 1 and 2 were about gaze refinement. As it turned out, her "intensive gaze" was not intensive in all respects, a fact that she corrected. She managed to shift the focus from what Mrs. Ramsay did not see to what she herself did not see and the potential she missed. She will now be able to bring together Mariana's three layers, not with Pre-Raphaelite language, but with Cubist, the new language of her time and a language that allows her to enter a trial-and-error process which suits a creative process best. Negotiations with each layer, all producing inner images that come out more and more, are captured in the process that is made visible for the reader. Her painting is the result of the research and development of her inner image which allows the abundant source of meaning that lies in every visual to be tapped in a structured way. This development work is reflected in the experimentation with painting elements that Lily as a Cubist artist conducts, so also with the layer of

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[608] *TL* 195

[609] *TL* 183

the nature picture, i.e., matter, and immediacy. Lily discusses her inner images with both the indoor scene (religious painting) and the outdoor scene (nature scene) in her line of vision and finally manages to create a harmonized portrait of Mrs. Ramsay that also displays Mr. Ramsay's stake in the picture as well as first and foremost Lily's own. Lily's concern with multiple perspective, multiple time dimension, the breaking open of existing forms and revealing essence, and the capturing of essence, make her learning process a Cubist discourse.

Lily has to capture two actuality pictures that are distant – remote due to time or place: the empty window that strongly triggers a very concrete memory picture and the sea scene that shows her objects at a great distance only. Within Lily's reach from her painting position on the lawn are, on the one hand, the drawing-room window with the empty steps towards the inside of the house and, on the other hand, her outdoor scene when she is "looking out over the bay"[610] and sees the sea panorama with the boat that brings Mr. Ramsay, James, and Cam to the Lighthouse. The challenge is to capture what evades her due to distance – both in time and space – every time she wants to paint it. It is the "etherealized shapes," that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything"[611]. Her art is giving shape to chaos. She wants to capture all she experienced in nature and now also in her relationships with other characters – the great fluidity that reaches all senses – in the materiality of painting. Let us recall, there is something wrong with the foreground in her initial portrait of Mrs. Ramsay and her son. Only when she uncouples herself from known forms can she find "something to base her vision on"[612] and bring everything into her canvas – the figurative white canvas associated with the visualized painting frame of Stage 3 of the model and taken outside on the lawn where Lily ventures to take her first brush stroke. She detects step by step what elements need to be worked in, where the challenges lie, and how to solve them. It is an experimental process during which Lily negotiates existing methods tried out in a new way and, while doing so, reveals to herself completely new ideas by successfully breaking open existing frames.

Lily challenges herself to apply a "trick of the painter's eye" when trying to paint Mrs. Ramsay from memory – when she is painting an absent figure due to a shift in time. The task is to represent absence, a form that is gone, a shadow, an essence of a being. The painter's trick is the suggestion of its own forms. Mere copying is not possible. Lily is safe from a temptation to simply reproduce, since there are no forms for her to simply adopt. Her painting process is a search for forms and shapes. She decides to use this trick deliberately, to close her eyes, and to imagine a form in her actuality, any reference point, that could produce a memory, an image, of the absent. What frustrated her before, namely, the evanescence of form, is now a problem she wants to attack.

> Lily squeezed her tubes again. She attacked that problem of the hedge. It was strange how clearly she saw her, stepping with her usual quickness across fields among whose folds, purplish and soft, among whose flowers, hyacinths or lilies, she vanished. It was some trick of the painter's eye. […]

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[610] *TL* 213

[611] *TL* 220

[612] *TL* 206

> Wherever she happened to be, painting, […] the vision would come to her, and her eyes, half closing, sought something to base her vision on.[613]

She recognizes her drive to paint as a vision and becomes visionary. She is not bothered with existing forms and shifting surfaces, as is usual in Impressionist painting. In order to find something in her exterior "to base her vision on," she even enters into a discussion of dissolution of known frames and outlines altogether.

> For the whole world seemed to have dissolved in this early morning hour into a pool of thought, a deep basin of reality, and one could almost fancy that […] a little tear would have rent the surface of the pool. And then? Something would emerge. A hand would be shoved up, a blade would be flashed. It was nonsense of course.[614]

Her "nonsense" is nothing other than thinking beyond what she had imagined so far – out of the box, so to speak. She wants to create an original with a new system of "relations of the masses." "[…] she could not shake herself free from the sense that everything this morning was happening for the first time…."[615] And she even offers the tear that bursts the water surface of the pool of reality, although she does not immediately label her tear a tear, as if to emphasize that it is a hot liquid before it is a tear and it does not necessarily signify sorrow – which would be a meaning commonly agreed on: "Her eyes were full of a hot liquid (she did not think of tears at first), which, without disturbing the firmness of her lips, made the air thick, rolled down her cheeks […], without being aware of any unhappiness."[616]

The absence due to special distance poses an equally challenging task. It requires mobility in her position: she moves on the lawn, switches between the two forces, Mr. Ramsay and the painting, and between her initial image and the newly gained ones of Mr. Ramsay – also figuratively between the inside and outside of Mariana's room. The sea view is a haze to her that is in need of distinguishing. "So fine was the morning except for a streak of wind here and there that the sea and sky looked all one fabric, as if sails were stuck high up in the sky, or the clouds had dropped down into the sea. […] the Lighthouse looked this morning in the haze an enormous distance away."[617] The fine morning is a repetition of the fine morning of her confrontation with Mr. Ramsay, the scene encoded by the man. This fine morning is different, however. It is dissolved; it is not realist anymore. It gives Lily the fluidity to work with in her painting. The people and objects in the scene all become one – "a deep basin of reality." "[...] so much depends, she thought, upon distance. […] He and his children seemed to be swallowed up in that blue, by that distance." [618] In her seaside perspective, portraiture is difficult. No visual trigger gives her indication of the personalities. "But this was one way of knowing people, she thought: to know the outline, not the detail, to sit in one's garden and look at the slopes of a hill

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[613] *TL* 206

[614] *TL* 203

[615] *TL* 220

[616] *TL* 204

[617] *TL* 207

[618] *TL* 213

running purple down into the distant heather."[619] She needs to pick what she wants to represent her experience with these characters and her relationship with them in the scene. She needs to create an immediacy with these emotions.

In her trial-and-error process, Lily also includes elements from her layer of the "religious painting," i.e., the symbols that stand for her initial idealizations. Additionally, this layer needs to be shaped by her and integrated into the order of the paintings she is developing. She comes across the topic of "classical beauty" again which so far she only knew in an idealized way. "[Lily] did not intend to disparage a subject which, they agreed, Raphael had treated divinely"[620] and wants to render full justice to the classical beauty that Mrs. Ramsay also is. She thus wants to capture the *third meaning* that conventional representation does not reveal to her – this is not new for her; however, what is new is her clarity about her intention. "Again she was roused as usual by something incongruous"[621] – movement on the surface. We learn from what seems to be a continuation of her conversation with scientifically-minded William Bankes; that is to say, now her thoughts are comprehensible:

> She looked now at the drawing-room step. She saw, through William's eyes, the shape of a woman, peaceful and silent, with downcast eyes. She sat musing, pondering (she was in grey that day, Lily thought). Her eyes were bent. She would never lift them. Yes, thought Lily, looking intently, I must have seen her look like that, but not in grey; nor so peaceful. The figure came readily enough. She was astonishingly beautiful, William said. But beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty – it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life – froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all under the cover of beauty.[622]

Lily is now able to explain why she is not satisfied with the representation of classical beauty. She has become a more conscious painter. Whereas before she sensed wind, sea, torments, saw colors, heard sounds when looking at nature, she now compares the movements in trees, hedges, and sea with the movements visible on the surface of people with which their whole nature can be determined. She is now able to integrate pieces of the "classical beauty" into her composition, just the ones that contribute to the intended meaning of her composition.

Much more is included into the emerging artwork. There is sound, for instance: "The rush of the water ceased; the world became full of little creaking and squeaking sounds. One heard the waves breaking and flapping against the side of the boat as if they were anchored in harbour."[623] There are forms of emotion with which to answer the following questions of hers: "For how could one express in words these emotions of the body? express that emptiness there? (She was looking at the drawing-

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[619] *TL* 221

[620] *TL* 200

[621] *TL* 206

[622] *TL* 201

[623] *TL* 208

room steps; they looked extraordinarily empty.) It was one's body feeling, not one's mind."[624] It is the meaning of the matter, not only of the ideas. Matter becomes meaningful for itself, which is a thought deeply rooted in Cubism. There are green and blue colors that reflect a mingling of her garden and seaside paintings. Moreover, the concept of geometric forms is elaborated. They have become more expressive than when William looked at the triangular shape for the first time. The purple shape is now "the shape of a woman."[625] It has been confirmed that the shapes have an advantage over conventional forms: they make a spectator look more closely than when she immediately recognizes an item. It is reduced to Lily's meaning and reveals much more, namely the spectator's contribution by her looking and reading.

After a great effort and applying immense creativity, Lily finally has her white canvas and no existing form disturbs her. She is positive that she can "solve the problem" and complete her work:

> Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it. […] Mercifully, whoever it was stayed inside; had settled by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture. It was interesting. It might be useful. Her mood was coming back to her. One must keep on looking without for a second relaxing the intensity of emotion, the determination not to be put off, not to be bamboozled. […] One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy. The problem might be solved after all.[626]

Lily recalls the triangular shape that she had previously painted. She remembers all the people she was together with when she painted the first time and reflects on what they're doing and in what way they influenced her. In any case, she wants to shield off current day changes, because they always distort her picture and the vision for which she now has found her expressive form. It is at that moment that Lily finds Mrs. Ramsay:

> 'Mrs Ramsay! Mrs Ramsay!' she cried, feeling the old horror come back – to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table […] sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stockings, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat.[627]

Lily compared her inability to grasp the essence with her feeling of being lacking in some way, a feeling of which Mrs. Ramsay always made her very conscious. Now she has found the essence. To become an "ordinary experience" means to bring her inner images to the surface and make use of them.

Despite the display of Mrs. Ramsay's essence, there is still the void in the center that, as we learn, is the absence that Mr. Ramsay's essence creates. These two parallel experiences of expeditions towards an ordinary and palpable result need to be captured in the painting too. When Mr.

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[624] *TL* 203

[625] *TL* 201

[626] *TL* 229

[627] *TL* 230

Ramsay finishes his expedition, Lily can finish hers: "'He has landed,' she said aloud. 'It is finished.'"[628] Mr Ramsay's touch "melted"[629] into Lily's painting. "She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision."[630] The painting now has all the necessary lines and the composition of relations of the masses to express her vision and her *Selbstbild* – the "attempt" of "her picture" is visible.[631]

4.3 Vision Accomplished

Lily teaches us not to try to change others, but to create a *Selbstbild* in a way that others should see her. Changing others would be imposing images on others which is wrong and ineffective – a fact that the heroine experiences for herself and sees visualized in Mrs. Ramsay. Lily learns for herself and develops and becomes innovative and creative. Only her *Selbstbild* can be improved, elaborated, created, experimented with, imagined, put into practice to become a negotiation tool for the interaction with other images and characters, and possibly an example that motivates others to work on their *Selbstbild* too. This is the power of invention, imagination, and creativity that has been made visible in *To the Lighthouse*.

Lily creates by her own effort and with her own strength. She does not have a like-minded person such as Dorothea has in Will and Isabel in Ralph. She even takes the process a step further than the previous heroines by turning her illusions that weaken her images into imagination and creativity and thus becomes productive. She thereby represents the second aspect of a quixotic achievement. For her, expressing herself gives her personality and position power. She becomes a lighthouse figure without her expecting her image to become the new truth and reality. Lily's shock is also that she is not different, although she fought hard for to be, and her realization is harsh: her lack of distinction is even more strongly owed to herself, since societal restrictions have reduced drastically since Dorothea's and Isabel's times. By coming out of the process even stronger and more determined, provides confirmation of the power of learning according to the *Awakening Conscience Process*.

Lily is presented as a way of understanding the *Awakening Conscience* Process. Her trial-and-error painting method is a doubling of the modeled process and, with it, a doubling of Hegelian cycles. Lily's experience and the finishing of her painting make this process and the therein incorporated rules of interaction visible. Her story reinforces the modeled development process. She experiences and extensively shows that although her creation is abstract and innovative, it is only innovative and creative this once; from now on it will be archaic for her. Future illusions will necessarily

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[628] *TL* 236

[629] *TL* 236

[630] *TL* 237

[631] *TL* 237

come and more cycles will begin. Shock moments are always necessary to prompt a spectator to create and develop her realism over and over again and thus to continuously refine her gaze and understanding of representation further.

With Lily, Woolf teaches the reader how to truly read realist paintings and be aware of *startlers*, namely with abstract painting. The reader of an abstract painting is more strongly involved than a spectator of mimetic art, since she has to read the representation and cannot just look and match what she sees with known forms and concepts. In abstract art, *startler* knowledge is integrated. However, if an abstract painting is already created, the integrated *startlers* have a reduced effect on a spectator. It is one's own *startlers* that have a startling impact which makes reading a painting equal to creating a painting and stresses once more the necessity of *active artists*.

Lily offers new forms and promotes creating innovative *third paintings*. Derived from that, it can be said that all creations are *third paintings* which in turn means that new forms always depend on existing ones and are always negotiations with what others know and accept. This is a truly Hegelian dialectic thought. Lily learns that, although new forms are created upon her own initiative, she is never able to create the forms by herself alone. A *third painting* can never be detached from one's immediate surroundings and one's inner images. She knows that creations always depend on other images and are always a processing of existing ones.

The novel does not leave commentary on this and earlier development processes to the reader, but lets a character comment on the position of female characters. By doing so, the female spectator is granted much more weight and responsibility here. It is a female spectator who is supposedly more conscious of limiting gazes and it is a female spectator who knows of hidden inner images and potential in female objects and could mirror these. A female character is in charge of bringing forth as much consciousness as possible on how self-consciousness building and positionality in society coincide. Lily is, in this sense, both inside and outside the narrative. She has a strategic position as a painter: she stands outside and between her nature painting and her indoor scene (a religious painting she re-encodes); she also sees, with "half-closed eyes," her inner images (emotions, attitudes, memories) that she manages to weave into both scenes. Lily is thus also a lighthouse figure due to her positioning of the novel.

5 The Gained-Consciousness Triptych

The three heroines have created a *third painting*. The *frail vessels* have turned into *active artists*. A *third painting* can be read as the execution of their plan to achieve their ambition to improve themselves and their surroundings by presenting an individual example of how to process what they experience in the frames they inhabit. This view holds the assumption that each heroine did, in fact, have an ambition to improve as a starting point, and that they saw their ambitions through after initial disappointments. As a consequence they refine themselves and with it their ambitions. The focus of such an analysis lies entirely on the three women's view and what they are willing and able to achieve. It is no longer merely on images men have of women and women's self-definition through these predetermined images. Here the focus is on the effect that their own vision and action to live these visions have on the way they are recognized. Much thought and work has been put into the heroines' works of art, their *third paintings*. The question arises now of what is going to happen with the artworks.

None of the heroines seem to consider showing her *third painting* to anybody. Above all, they offer them for their own clarification. However, as can be argued, the authors want their heroines' stories to be known and their *third paintings* to be read. Eliot's interest in making visible the progressive message of "Dorothea's achievement" has been discussed by Ashton.[632] Although the heroine leaves the spotlight at the end of the novel, *Middlemarch* will live on and, even if left on the train before completely read, it will be continued by future authors and readers. James has his heroine turn to the reader when she is expected to show us her *third painting* (expectation based on Stage 3 of the model) and thereby ask for the reader's contribution in the completion of the work. Apparently, a third painting is not finished if it is only about one heroine. Finally, Woolf positions her painter character in a way that she can comment on the characters who do not continue works started by earlier heroines. Furthermore, she grants her complete freedom in her creation of the painting and furnishes her with the consciousness that "one must"[633] show creations to others.

This thesis presents a triptych of *third paintings* by means of an analysis of the power of expression and the strength of spectator involvement, by which the question of the effectiveness of one painting tendency of the *third paintings* compared to others can be studied. In order to be able do such an analysis, an overview of the development processes and a repeated presentation of the *third paintings* is necessary (cf. Table 3). The analysis deals with the *Kunstwollen* of each generation of *third painting* for the question of their contribution to the expression and involvement power of the triptych of the three *third paintings* together.

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[632] Cf. Ashton xix

[633] *TL* 61

Table 3 *Third Painting* Triptych (own illustration)

Part of the analysis	Dorothea	Isabel	Lily
1. Art Discourse	Renaissance painting: • language of idealization • language of fragmented gaze • not understandable, not understood Realist painting: • could express Puritan ambition, but does not cover urge to be received as an individual Pre-Raphaelite painting: • as a means to bring into unison pietistic ideals as well as worldly goals	Renaissance painting: • language of idealization for Isabel of European life and the stability and power of her modernism • conventional way of representing the heroine • no own artistic language for Isabel, no challenge of Renaissance paintings Modernist art: • to display chaos of the web of relations in a modern society	Renaissance painting: • representation of women by male and conventional society Realist art: • conventional art • not fully understood, only frame perceived Impressionist art: • Lily's ability to see behind the façade of conventional art in the form of realism Cubist art: • Lily's own artistic language • Lily's ability to create and be innovative
2. Model Discourse	Ambition to improve: • wishes for activities to do good in her marriage and society • would like to have a greater effect with her actions Necessity to learn: • all layers of reality need to be included in her *Selbstbild* • the inner image needs to be externalized AC Model: • all necessary steps based on Hegelian, psychoanalytical, and Eliot's theory on development visualized • model implications established and confirmed	Ambition to improve: • wishes for independent decisions about her life • would like to have the freedom to reflect on issues and apply own logic Necessity to learn: • decisions are never independent of others' views and capability of reception/perception • give up her illusions and deal with the expression possibilities in modern society AC Model: • challenged • *third painting* unclear, other model implications confirmed • raises question of detecting illusions with model knowledge	Ambition to improve: • wishes that women would do more out of the experience with emancipation other women before Necessity to learn: • she cannot change others; if she wants change she needs to suggest the change she wants to see implemented herself; only possible with own creation, own *third painting* AC Model: • confirmed • confirms that danger of falling into illusion always there; illusion always due to own inner images • necessity of creation emphasized
3. Applicability Discourse	Characteristics of *Third Painting*: • painting finished • visible to reader, no other characters • coherence creation • result of epiphany Expression power, spectator involvement: • comprehensible display of how multi-layeredness and can be dealt with (looking closely at each layer) • concept of layering and harmonization understandable • visible life in the representation • process could be applied	Characteristics of *Third Painting*: • *third painting* probably not complete • not visible to reader, her result left open • she cannot finish it alone; it requires the reader's contribution • assignment for reader to complete it • result of her emotions that had finally come out Expression power, spectator involvement: • example of visual language and result not visible, which could give an idea of how to tackle the problem • no danger of imitating the result later and by that feeling that *third painting* can be created	Characteristics of *Third Painting*: • painting finished • not visible to reader nor other characters • creation of order and logic, simplification • issue examined from various perspectives • managed to unify past and present • last stroke result of epiphany Expression power, spectator involvement: • process made very clear, result not relevant, this is Lily's only • example of establishing own understanding and have courage to display it • motivating and inspiring for others to create

The three *third paintings* can be described and compared as follows: 1) Dorothea finishes her painting and makes it visible to the reader. It shows the coherence of her experiences and how she sees the world and herself in it. She has gained clarity and a form of expression that gives her calmness, confidence, and a purpose. She has managed to transform a highly moral and Puritan way of life into the present-day and thereby shows how a vision is made. By means of her *third painting*, the fact that complexity can be managed is demonstrated, but that only if the multiple layers of reality – ideals, form into which to bring the energy of the ideals, and the motivation for the ideals – are each carefully studied and understood. 2) Isabel does not display her third painting, so we do not know if it has been started yet. She does not show what it looks like and how far she has proceeded. She invites the reader into the creation, implying that it would not be completed without the reader's doing. By means of her third painting, the question of learning from previous model processes and passing on experience is discussed in detail. Experience can only be passed on in the form of process knowledge. 3) Lily took her time to create her own painting without immediately negotiating every thought she has. Her creative power is only emphasized by this – that is, her impressive capability of processing and using all the potential material in her surroundings. She, moreover, makes no secret of the fact that coming up with one's own creation takes both courage and a drive that is as strong as hers. As becomes obvious, each part of triptych contributes one emphasized aspect to the overall discussion of *Bildung durch Bilder* and the possibilities of self-determination in a modern society. The combination of all contributions forms a new composition with yet further meanings and messages.

The *Third Painting* Triptych is, in this sense, a Cubist composition of the three *third paintings* and all the emotions, experiences, attached meanings, other-views, and *Selbstbilder* found in the heroines' lives and times. In a Cubist artwork, the painter gets hold of the meaning that she would like to express and gives it her own system of forms. The order and logic that I have given to the chaos and complexity of development stories presented by three heroines who lived in complex frameworks, is the *Awakening Conscience Model*. Issues of development and emancipation, trial and error, experience and creativity, have been examined from various angles – at least the three provided by the novels – and under the inclusion of a fragmented time dimension. Forms, shapes, and lines are chosen as to express my conviction that gaze refinement does in fact lead to autonomy, creativity, and results. With this Cubist composition I would like to add the additional thought about the presentation of *third paintings*. It is that of strategic positionality and the way an individual's positioning takes place and furthermore that it is an active task. *Third paintings* should not be hidden and the fact that an individual works on her improvement – makes mistakes and learns from them – should be made public. Lily is an example: She continues Dorothea's (or Eliot's) radically modern views. Lily does not want to depend on the reception of herself that others express, but to influence that reception (she cannot determine it). The character of Dorothea was supported in painting her ambition: she had Will and Eliot; she had Isabel and James; she had Lily and Woolf. The discourse she started seems to me worth continuing and developing.

The discussion going onward from this triptych could go into several directions. The *Awakening Conscience Model* could be abstracted even more which would mean further detachment of *pictorial indicators* from the initial underlying real paintings in order to identify *third paintings* in even

more contexts. Furthermore, there is the moral discourse that development is a continuous requirement: to always improve. A revival of the Adam Smith and Puritan theory of liberalism is possible; a theory that suggests the improvement of each individual and thereby improvement to society: to assume a responsibility to see clearly and a responsibility to contribute to an improvement of society. What about focusing on the topic of promoting creativity and innovation through interaction and the contributions from various people with their own experiences. Why not initiate a Cubist revival and celebrate a highlight of out-of-the-box thinking in art? A debate about the strategic positionality of women in business could be initiated. The debate is often held from the perspective of the necessary changes of the framework that are not initiated by individuals. The power of change-driving positioning with *third paintings* is receiving more attention in this field of research. Strategic positionality with *third paintings* could also be made a general issue – for men and women. The triptych could raise an appetite for more interdisciplinary studies of painting and literature and credit literature and arts as deserving of recognition for being a rich source of knowledge in modern life. Cubism requires readers who introduce and develop their realism and thus contribute to the development discourse by means of images yet to be continued – so does the Cubist *Bildung-durch-Bilder*-Triptychon.

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